# Industrial Worker

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## Detroit Wobblies sponsor Chiapas contingent

Detroit Wobblies have lent their support as international observers in the state of Chiapas in southern Mexico for the past year.

Observers have been needed in the area due to continued military, paramilitary and government harassment of the autonomous indigenous communities of Zapatista supporters. Working with the Irish/Mexico Group and the community of Diez De Abril, near the city of Altamirano, Detroit IWW members have had the opportunity to exchange experiences and resources with a diverse group of people from the highlands of Chiapas and the world.

Diez de Abril is a community of approximately 100 indigenous families who, in 1994, on the day that NAFTA went into effect, took the land that they had been slaving on back from the landowner. Now the land is worked collectively and profits from the selling of coffee and other products are divided equally among those who work to produce them.

The Irish/Mexico Group was originally set up as a six-month experiment at the request of the indigenous people of Diez De Abril. It was decided that a constant presence was necessary in the area due to continued theft and arson and other crimes perpetrated by the Mexican military. The presence the community requested was not to take the form of past projects in which observers arrived, spent their predetermined amount of time and then departed with little exchange of ideas and experience. Diez De Abril desired observers who had a stake in seeing success in the region.

The six-month experiment has turned into a three-year relationship. Over the years there have been successes and failures, deportations, continued military theft and arson; a school built and a church under construction, as well as a documentary for Irish Public Television. But most importantly, there has been the growing and prospering relationship between people whose experiences are radically different from each other, sharing political ideas and history, and an outpouring of pain, joy and laughter.

There are still so many questions and blockades to real solidarity work. We are the ones with things, strange clothes and funny haircuts. We are the ones who can't

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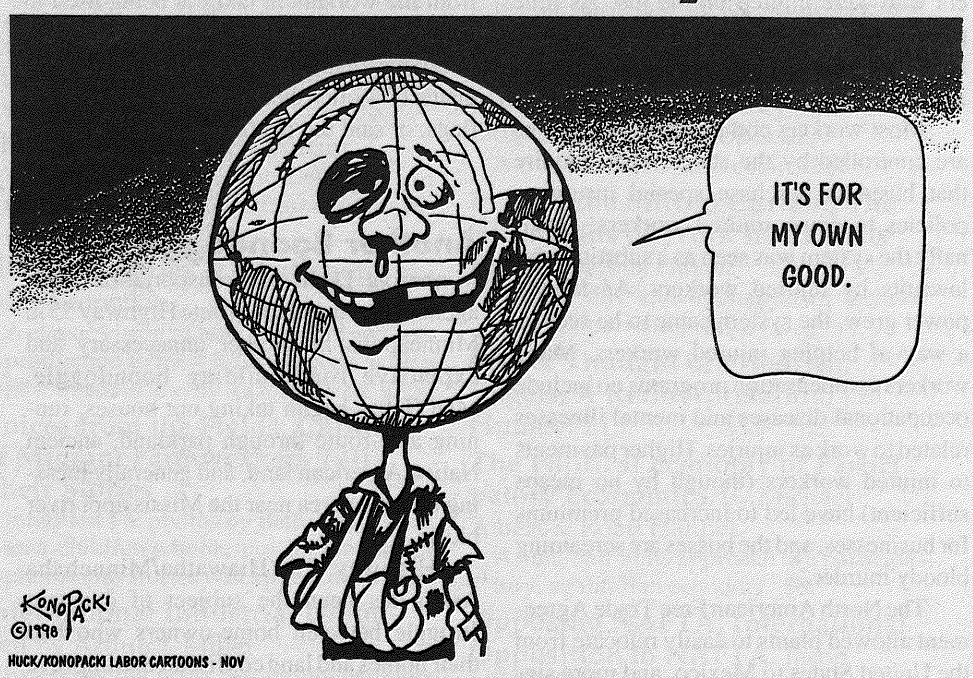
**No Democracy in the Iron Workers Union**

**Boycott Borders Update**



$1, 75 pence UK 12 0 74470 83350 5


## Bosses beaten on MAI treaty




The Multilateral Agreement on Investment, a major corporate attack on development, environmental protection and workers' rights, has been scrapped.

Negotiations on the MAI began in 1995 within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and came to a crashing halt in October. On the eve of the reopening of negotiations French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin described the MAI as "unreformable" and a "threat to the sovereignty of states." A central concern appears to have been the threat to the French film industry from unrestricted Hollywood imports; since the OECD operates by consensus MAI backers will have to start over.

The abandonment of the MAI is a significant blow to corporate ambitions. In the July/August issue of *Z magazine,* Noam Chomsky described the postponement of the signing of the MAI in April as "an important event ... In part, the failure resulted from internal disputes – for example, European objections to the US federal system and the extraterritorial reach of US laws, concerns about maintaining some degree of cultural autonomy, and so on. But a much more significant problem was looming. It was becoming increasingly difficult to ensure that the rules of global order would continue to be 'written by the lawyers and businessmen who plan to benefit' and 'by governments taking advice and guidance from these lawyers and businessmen' ... without public interference."

Chomsky cited reports from the *Economist, New York Times, Washington Post, Time magazine, and Toronto Globe and Mail,* all agreeing that the delay had been in large part due to "a global band of grassroots organisations, which, with little more than computers and access to the Internet, helped derail a deal."

The most terrified commentary came from the *Financial Times:* "Fear and bewilderment have seized governments" as the secret negotiations to impose the MAI "have been ambushed by a horde of vigilantes whose motives and methods are only dimly understood in most national capitals." The hordes included "trade unions, environmental and human rights lobbyists and pressure groups opposed to globalisation." The abandonment of the treaty is also, in part, due to the threat of accountability posed by these terrifying hordes.

There would seem to have been four main dangers from the MAI, based on a leaked draft text.

1) It would transform rights from citizens to transnational companies. The already limited democratic rights of citizens and powers of elected local and national governments over business investment in their territories would be largely transferred to corporations. Under the MAI, transnationals would have been granted the right to operate in any sector, in any country, in whatever form they chose. A ground-breaking feature of the MAI was that it would grant foreign companies the right to sue

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## Mumia Abu-Jamal Must Not Die

The Oct. 30 Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision denying a new trial to death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is being met with outraged protests around the world. Some 2,500 people, including many IWW members, marched in an emergency protest in Philadelphia Nov. 7 – one of many to follow as Mumia's lawyers prepare what will likely be their final legal appeal.

Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge had long vowed to sign a new death warrant as soon as the ruling was announced, but has not yet done so as we go to press. In 1995, it took a massive campaign of international protest, including by unions representing millions of workers from Italy to South Africa, to stay the hands of the executioners when Ridge had signed an earlier warrant for Jamal's death that summer. Several Philadelphia-area unions are supporting the demand for a new trial, and IWW members in Philadelphia and around the world have been active in the campaign.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an eloquent and outspoken opponent of racism and injustice who has been hounded by the Philadelphia police and FBI since the time he was a teenage spokesman for the Black Panther Party in the late 1960s. He continued to draw police attention as a journalist who specialized in exposing police brutality and corruption. Now the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has issued a 71-page ruling endorsing each and every aspect of his racist frame-up and false conviction for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner.

In a demonstration of flagrant bias, the court ruling dismisses as "incredible" every piece of testimony by witnesses testifying on Jamal's behalf and every piece of evidence submitted by Jamal's defense team. At the same time, they find totally "credible" every action and piece of testimony by the Philadelphia cops. The Philadelphia Police Department is notorious for racist frame-ups. In 1979, the U.S. Attorney General filed a civil rights lawsuit charging "widespread, arbitrary and unreasonable physical abuse" of witnesses and suspects. The antics of the Philadelphia police became an international spectacle when corruption in the 38th & 39th police districts came to light and hundreds of convictions in Philadelphia have been thrown out due to falsified evidence presented at trial.

The Court ruling also upholds every action by Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over Mumia's original trial in 1982 and subsequent hearings, despite the fact that his pro-prosecution bias was so blatant that the *Philadelphia Daily News* complained that Sabo's "heavy-handed tactics can only confirm suspicions that the court is incapable of giving Abu-Jamal a fair hearing." The Supreme Court order was signed by Justice Ronald Castillo, who as District attorney played a key role in denying a new trial to Mumia ten years ago and signed prosecution briefs filed against Mumia's earlier appeal.

A mountain of evidence has come out demonstrating that Jamal did not receive a fair trial, that witnesses were threatened and bribed, and that Jamal's legal counsel at the time of his conviction was not allowed important resources and information which could have helped in his defense.

At least five witnesses told police that another man – not Jamal, who was found

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## IWW Ballots Due Dec. 12

Ballots for 1999 officers will be counted Dec. 12 in Ypsilanti, Mich. Ballots are available from delegates and IWW headquarters.


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# Readers' Soapbox

## Workers Compensation

The assault against workers' compensation across the United States has intensified since NAFTA went into effect in 1994. One state legislature after another has opted to "reform" workers compensation since then.

Workers compensation laws were passed around the turn of the century, essentially to save bosses from litigation by workers who were injured on the job. As time passed, the laws became more friendly to injured workers and the bosses have turned against them.

Most workers compensation programs are controlled by the states. They require that business purchase special insurance policies to cover injured workers. Originally the system was seen as a substitute for lawsuits by injured workers. As labor's power grew, the system came to be seen as a way of helping injured workers. Many workers compensation programs no include occupational diseases and mental illnesses related to work as injuries. Higher payments to injured workers (though by no means sufficient) have led to increased premiums for businesses, and the bosses are screaming bloody murder.

The North American Free Trade Agreement allowed plants to easily relocate from the United States to Mexico, and more significantly to threaten to relocate. Bosses have used the threat to relocate operations to extract all sorts of concessions from unions and state governments, including workers compensation "reform."

Let's follow this out again. Money taken from the workers in taxes is being used to negotiate and enforce a treaty that destroys programs for injured workers – and it doesn't matter how often those workers voted, waved flags, or said the pledge of allegiance.

— Robert Rice
St. Louis, Missouri

## Another Boondoggle

Minnesota Dept. of Transportation management has decided to route Highway 55 in Minneapolis in another unnecessary and expensive road-building boondoggle. MDOT has begun taking out houses, running a re-route through parkland, ancient Native American land, and generally messing up a nice area near the Mississippi river bluffs.

Highway 55 (Hiawatha/Minnehaha Ave.) has been the subject of constant struggle between home-owners who had their homes and land confiscated to improve the road, the general public, and MDOT's stupid bureaucratic management for 35 years. MDOT apparently refuses to change its plans for fear of "losing face," leading to a series of disputes over several road projects in the area.

Native Americans are suing to get their land back, citing an 1863 law which has been violated by the government ever since.

Carol Kratz and her ill husband have refused to sell their home to MDOT, or to move. Some homes have already been demolished, but others have been occupied by protesters from environmental and Native American groups, who are protecting an ancient ceremonial site. The University of Minnesota has laid off a Native American pipefitter who requested a leave of absence to join the occupation.

Twin Cities Wobs have been active in this campaign, which is very much a union concern, and have joined other activist groups in demonstrations and in a blockade against the demolition.

Contributions to support this struggle can be sent to FW Sam Adams, 1708 E 26th St., Minneapolis MN.

— Don Kurth
Richfield, Minn.

## Industrial Worker Sustaining Fund

| | |
|---|---|
| Mark Damron, Cincinnati OH | $10.00 |
| John Spitzberg, Pompano Beach | 100.00 |
| Tom Johnson, Newmarket NH | 15.00 |
| McArthur Gunter, Camp Springs | 19.19 |

*Many thanks, fellow workers, for your generous support.*

## Industrial Workers of the World Fighting Fund

| | |
|---|---|
| Louis Bargo, Iron Mountain MI | $25 |
| Dennis Henke, Memphis TN | 20 |
| E. Kiern Crosswhite, Memphis TN | 5 |
| Peter Kalberer, Albuquerque NM | 100 |
| Peter Brinson, Sarasota FL | 50 |
| John Liner, Bradenton FL | 20 |
| David Brennan, Seattle WA | 6 |
| David Brodsky, Prairie Village KS | 5 |
| Robert Sparks, Cincinnati OH | 12 |

Total raised to date: $2,361
Goal by Dec. 30: $5,000

*Your contribution helps support IWW outreach and to reduce our deficit.*

IU 120: Lumber Workers
IU 330: Building Construction Workers
IU 450: Print & Publishing House Workers
IU 460: Food Processing Workers
IU 510: Marine Transport Workers
IU 560: Communications Workers
IU 610: Health Service Workers
IU 620: Education Workers
IU 630: Entertainment Workers
IU 640: Restaurant & Hotel Workers
IU 660: General Distribution Workers
IU 670: Public Service Workers

**Industrial Worker**

*THE VOICE OF REVOLUTIONARY INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM*

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Job Branch= 5 or more members in workplace; GMB=General Membership Branch; IU=Industrial Union; Del=Delegate; GOC=Organizing Committee.

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Monterey– Ray Brown, IU 330 delegate, 1231 4th St., 93940. 831/333-9803.

Santa Cruz GMB– PO Box 534, 95061. phone: 831/427-5566.

San Francisco Bay Area GMB– PO Box 40485, S.F. 94140. office: Redstone Building, 2940 16th St. (at Capp) #216-2, S.F. 94103. 415/863-WOBS. staff@iww.org

San Francisco Bay Ports Marine Transport Workers IU 510– PO Box 194163, Ricon Hill Station, SF 94114-4163.

East Bay office and IU 670 Berkeley Recycling Center Job Branch: 2022 Blake St., Berkeley 94704, 510/845-0540. Meets Thursday evenings at 7 p.m.

IU450 New Earth Press Job Shop– 1921 Ashby, Berkeley 94703 510/549-0176

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IU450 P&L Printing Job Shop– 2298 Clay, Denver 80211. 303/433-1852

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WYOMING

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# IWW hits Melbourne Borders

Ten Wobblies and supporters met outside of the new Borders bookshop in Melbourne, Australia, recently to protest this U.S. bookstore chain's working conditions and their union-busting behavior.

We had two leaflets to hand out – one for customers and another specifically addressed to the workers which talked about what had happened to workers in the U.S. stores and urged them to organize.

All in all we had many favourable responses to the leaflets. Most people read the leaflets and appeared interested. We had many comments e.g.: "Well, I won't be shopping here again," "I didn't know this," "Keep it up," "I complained about this shop last week, because they didn't have many book with Australian content!" "Good on yas for leafletting."

One of our members met the public relations officer for the shop. She expressed concern that we had not notified the shop of our intention to picket the store. She explained that workers conditions at Borders Melbourne had been set up differently to the U.S. stores in that all workers had individual workplace agreements with very special benefits. She also expressed her commitment to free speech and said she would have liked to hand out leaflets with us also(!).

We signed up one member during the action, and are well on our way to forming a branch.

All in all a pretty favourable time!

X345678

## Borders workers need a union

You might have noticed that life in Melbourne's bookshops has changed a little with the arrival of Borders Books to 500 Chapel Street, South Yarra. As an employee of Borders you might even like working there. Our experience in the U.S. of Borders corporate practices leads us to offer a...

**Health Warning!**

Borders' employment practices have been the subject of complaints by Noam Chomsky, the famous American academic, and the Philadelphia City Council. They have included unjustified dismissal of employees for merely following company procedures.

As is typical with U.S. companies Borders Inc have sought to keep unions out of its stores. They have gone as far as providing a manual for store managers on how to do this locally. Our union has copies of this and have made them freely available on the Internet (http://parsons.iww.org/~borders).

... Borders bosses are being pushed on the back foot in the U.S. IWW members protested outside the new Oxford Street store which ironically opened with Billy Bragg performing "workers solidarity songs." We want to make sure their efforts in Australia are also held accountable!

Borders is a transnational company which is the self-acknowledged No.2 bookseller in the world. We sincerely believe that the only way a workers can organise in a transnational company is through transnational unionism. A transnational union with low subscriptions, complete membership control, no bureaucracy and no false offers of low insurance is the perfect remedy to the worldwide employer.

**Join The Union!**

The General Distribution Workers Industrial Union is part of the Industrial Workers of the World which has been a thorn in the flesh of Borders Inc management for some time. Borders own management manual credits the IWW as follows:

"The IWW has distributed leaflets inside and outside of several stores including Boston, San Francisco, Towson, Los Angeles, Portland (Oregon), Santa Monica, Chicago, Santa Barbara, Honolulu, Seattle, Madison, Novi, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, White Plains, Utica, Ann Arbor and others."

Industrial Workers of the World
PO Box 145, Moreland 3058

## Borders loses more ground

Borders posted losses of $800,000 for the three months ending Oct. 25, even as it opened overseas superstores in London (where IWW leafletters graced the festivities), Brighton, England, Melbourne, and Glasgow, Scotland. Meanwhile, Barnes & Noble continues to increase its sales lead.

In San Francisco, independent booksellers and community activists joined forces to stop Borders' efforts to open a store on Union Street. The planning commission rejected Borders' application Nov. 6.

While Borders continues to refuse to end its virulent union-busting campaign which led to the IWW's boycott campaign, the chain's shaky performance has led to CEO Robert DiRomualdo being kicked upstairs. He has been replaced as Borders Group chief executive officer by former Ingram CEO and Random House president Philip Pfeffer. DiRomualdo remains chairman of Borders' board of directors.

## Around Our Union




*On October 2 the La Crosse, Wisconsin, IWW Group held a protest picket in front of the Bodega Brew Pub in downtown La Crosse. The picket was called in response to the illegal firing and harassment of a Wob who threatened to file a complaint for not receiving pay on time and for never receiving pay for labor while training. The picket drew a lot of attention from the community and resulted in current workers getting a 50 cent raise in pay. The Fellow Worker who was fired has now moved on.* — *Omar Poler*

## Nike Action

On October 17, Chicago Wobs joined Jobs With Justice and the Labor Rights Task Force of the Guatamala Solidarity Committee in picketing Nike Town on Michigan Avenue. The 30-40 pickets did not seem to have much effect on the mesmerized consumers who crossed the line to enter the store. Many refused to even accept our leaflets explaining what was going on. One jerk cynically quipped as he entered the store, "I support child labor." What an asshole!

One problem with campaigns such as this is that it seems that your average American shopper just doesn't want to know the conditions under which their purchases are produced. The lack of consciousness or even desire to know what's going on is astounding. But we'll keep banging on the door, hoping against hope that someone is home and will answer the door.

— Mike Hargis

## Food Not Bosses

On Oct. 23 about 40 wage-slaves gathered on the corner of 13th and University in Gainesville, Florida, to speak out against the scapegoating of street-people and low-wage workers in the University Heights district. The action, a joint project of the Gainesville branches of the IWW and Food Not Bombs, was based on a similar one held in the Castro district of San Francisco.

Free food was served, fliers were handed out, and low-wage workers and homeless people got the chance to speak out about what we can do to change the fact that Gainesville not only has one of the lowest wage scales in the nation, but also one of the highest rates of hunger. Suggestions included organizing worker-run unions, shutting down the city with a general strike, and by-passing the day labor sharks by using city parks or street-corners instead. Also suggested was taking over abandoned houses, organizing tenant unions, and fighting back against businesses that gentrify working-class neighborhoods.

## Southern IWW Meeting

Florida Wobblies are planning the 2nd Southern IWW Conference to be held December 4-6 (Friday-Sunday) on the Gulf of Mexico in northern Florida. The agenda will include interviews for a Wobbly interview, organizing in right to work states, building a Regional Organizing Committee for the South, industrial network meetings for education and restaurant workers, the regional newsletter, etc. For details contact the Gainesville IWW.

## Greensboro, NC

After some loss in membership due to fellow workers relocating, the Greensboro IWW is looking up again. We recently took part in an anti-Faircloth (the now defeated Senator) demonstration alongside other unionists. We have also been working on an anti-sweatshop/Guess leafleting campaign targeting local college campuses locally. Rank-and-File members of UNITE! and Wobs hit the University of North Carolina-Greensboro for a few hours and the action was picked up by the college newspaper.

## Technology at Work

Penny Pixler of the Chicago GMB gave the second of the branch's public talks at the Autonomous Zone Bookstore Oct. 28, speaking on the revolutionary possibilities of technology. The grist of her talk was that technology is not neutral, but rather reflects the society that produces it. Decisions regarding the introduction of new technology in this society, like most other decisions, are made in the interests of corporate profit.

Thus GM bought up Los Angeles' electric trolley system of public transportation and scrapped it. Public funding for highway building is undiminished, while funding for public transportation is cut again and again. In northern Illinois, in the early 1970s, Commonwealth Edison built a number of nuclear power plants; the protests of environmental activists were ineffectual and now the rate payers are picking up the tab for demolishing the aging plants after years of paying the third highest electricity rates in the U.S.

The first oil crisis generated some interest in research into alternative sources of electric power; the Reagan administration terminated the funding and in a symbolic gesture had the solar energy panels removed from the White House roof. Computers make increased surveillance and more telemarketing possible; the Internet seems likely to become little more than a tool for advertisers. Medical research is largely controlled by the drug companies; developments of new food plants by agriculture companies; the coal and oil industries fight to block research on global warming. And on and on.

In the discussion, people discussed ways to push for more public participation in developing new technology. FW Pixler recommended three books: Weisman's *Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World;* Udall's *The Myths of August: A Personal Exploration of Our Tragic Cold War Affair with the Atom;* and Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow.*

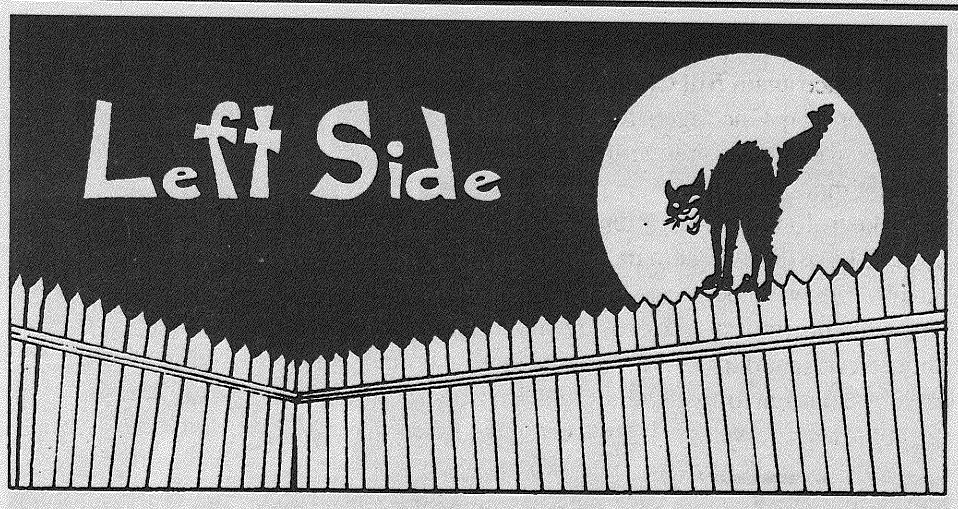
## Preamble to the IWW Constitution

**The working class and the employing class have nothing in common.** There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. **Between these two classes** a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

**We find** that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

**These conditions can be changed** and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

**Instead of the conservative motto,** "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system." **It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism.** The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with the capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.




Here in Freedomland the elections are finally over and nothing has really changed other than that we are being spoon-fed BS in smaller doses. This is the month that we have the great consumerist orgy to celebrate the mythical birth of the Prince of Peace. As tykes we used to believe in Santa Claus and now we labor under the delusion that there is no Santa Claus; however, the old boy is alive and well insofar as we the producers play Santa Claus to the parasite class that continues to mess up our lives.

There are those non-believers who insist that by virtue of the fact that the Romans kept meticulous records of all those whom they executed, there is no mention of any Jesus Christ and therefore he is but another mythical personage. However, during the years attending his supposed existence there was a resistance movement against the tyranny of the Roman Empire. Spontaneous movements on the part of nameless masses of people invariably become identified with one person, real or mythical. Ghandi and Martin Luther King are but two examples in point.

Those who write history books for the establishment seem to be unable to conceive of movements arising spontaneously from the nameless masses, or more likely they do not like the nameless masses to get the idea that they do not necessarily have need for messiahs or great leaders.

On the other hand, the Roman historians like their modern colleagues, find it convenient to omit the names of those whose ideas are threatening to their established order. How many history books mention Karl Marx, Mikhail Bakunin or William D. Haywood? Those historians who depend upon the ruling elites for their livelihood are not going to make available ideas that could result in the long-awaited obsolescence of ruling elites.

Educational systems are very disinclined to provide the type of education that would teach people how to do their own thinking. The principal goal of "educators" is promoting conformity to the established order and the role of higher education is to take advantage of those who did not get as much education. We are being fed the names of kings, emperors, presidents and the rich ones whose wealth far exceeds their value to humanity. Those personages whose creativity have enriched the quality of our lives have little or no mention at all in the history books. There may be footnotes about certain scientists, artists or composers; poets, forget them. But it's the names of these creative ones who are remembered after the uncreative ones are long forgotten.

Who can name the rulers of Germany at the time of Bach, Beethoven or Brahms? Who knows who the ruler of Holland when Rembrandt was doing his painting, or who were the presidents when Mark Twain or Jack London were writing their books?

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. And he is us.

— C.C. Redcloud

# Winnipeg Wobblies Get Certified

Despite previous bureaucratic obstacles, the IWW scored another victory on September 22nd. Thanks to a landslide vote, the IWW was established as the sole and official representative of grocery workers at Harvest Collective in Manitoba.

85 percent of workers voted in favour of the Manitoba Labour Relations Board certifying the IWW as their union. As reported in September's IW, Harvest Wobs suffered numerous setbacks due to red tape encountered while filing for a vote on certification with the MLRB. Harvest workers withdrew their petition to be certified as part of the Manitoba General Membership Branch (IWW) when this proved bureaucratically nightmarish and successfully reapplied as the Harvest Collective Branch, General Distribution Workers Industrial Union 660 (IWW) after receiving their branch charter from the IWW General Executive Board.

The grocery workers are now in the process of drawing up a proposed collective agreement and will start bargaining in the near future. They plan to build upon Harvest Collective's existing personnel policies to create a slightly expanded collective agreement which management will be legally bound to follow. Certain issues such as scheduling, hiring, grievance procedures and job security are high on workers' lists of concerns as are possibly child care, wage parity and worker evaluations.

Unfortunately, some slightly misleading information was reported about the situation of Harvest workers in the September *IW*. Although most (if not all) Harvest workers live below the official poverty line, very few suffer grinding poverty but rather live simple lives. Also, while taking into account that Manitoba has the third lowest minimum wage of any Canadian province, most Harvest workers earn more than minimum wage. This relatively good wage (for service industry work) is unfortunately counter-acted by part-time/casual schedules and the lack of any benefits package (medical & dental) for the majority of workers.

Harvest Wobblies are thus going strong and will continue the fight for a worker-controlled society. The recent certification victory has proven good for workers' energy at Harvest and also marks an historic moment in Manitoba Labour. Although Manitoba has a rich history of OBU activity early on in the century, the Harvest Collective Industrial Branch is the first certified IWW union in Manitoban history. This is due to the illegality of the IWW in decades past as a seditious organization and other various red scares. The task for Harvest Wobs now is to slowly help radicalize the Manitoba Labour movement and hopefully prove to be such a threat to the Boss Class that we can make the IWW illegal again!

— Patrick McGuire

## Union Scabbing

As we go to press, more than 2,000 ABC television workers are still locked-out, with Disney refusing to take them back unless they promise advance warning of any future job actions, so Disney-ABC can have scabs all ready to go. Guess the quickie strike must have been effective…

But the dispute points up the need for industrial unionism. While the technicians are locked-out, reporters and other on-air talent continue working under a separate contract. Thus far, they're refusing to handle the equipment, but if they honored the picket lines ABC would be off the air. UPS drivers are honoring the picket lines, but unionized postal, electrical and telephone workers are maintaining uninterrupted service. It sure is noble, this fighting the class war with one hand tied behind our back. But, me, I'd rather win.

## Opportunity

The U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reports that some 210,000 teenagers are injured on the job every year, double the rate of injuries for adult workers.

Many put in long hours operating dangerous equipment with little or no training at rock-bottom wages. Then they graduate into today's booming economy, where many will find themselves on the streets.

But the bosses are working overtime coming up with jobs for them. If there isn't room in one of the brand-spanking-new prisons (complete with sub-minimum jobs working for some of America's largest corporations), then they can go on workfare. Especially now that a New York appeals court has overturned a ruling that workfare slaves should be paid the same rate as the public workers they are displacing.

## 189 billionaires

We hardly feel the weight of the millions of people trying to eke out an existence on the welfare rolls. But the bums on the plush, there's a different story. *Forbes* magazine reports that they're 189 billionaires in the United States, and that the combined wealth of the 400 richest people in the country is now $738 billion – enough to bring 30 years' worth of basic health care and food to everyone in the world now going without. All it would take would be a slight change in management. And they'd none of them be missed, they'd none of them be missed.

## Prescription: Raise Wages

Manitoba's medical officers of health are pushing the province to raise the minimum wage, saying the current rate contributes to the depressed health status of the working poor. Raising the minimum wage is as important to community health as inoculating people against diseases such as hepatitis B and influenza, said Dr. Penny Sutcliffe, medical officer of health for northern Manitoba.

Sutcliff and 17 colleagues signed a submission to the minimum wage review board urging that the wage be raised to at least $7.85 an hour, so that workers can afford basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. The doctors' submission cites almost 40 studies and reports that indicate that the poor and working poor suffer from more disease and ill health.

**Organize Where You Are Robbed – On the Job!**

## Editor's Notebook



## Their Elections, And Ours...

Here in the states, the biannual charade has drawn to a merciful close, and the ruling class has somehow managed to cling to power – not that they bothered to put any alternatives on the ballot. So "socialist" congressman Bernie Sanders, known for his fondness for non-union printers, is free to continue his scheme to ship nuclear wastes from the Vermont Yankee plant to an impoverished county along the Rio Grande. Sanders is a big fan of nukes, and like any plutocrat he wants to make others bear the burden of his follies….

In the IWW we leave it to each member whether to enter the voting booth, and to determining how much evil they can stomach should they venture into the cesspool. Most of us would rather put our energies into organizing on the job, where we have the potential to make some real choices about matters which directly affect our lives and the shape of our society.

But IWW members have the opportunity to take some important decisions right now. Everyone whose dues are paid up should have received their ballot a couple weeks back. A lot more's at stake than who will edit this paper or serve as IWW officers next year – since members run this union, they have the final say on several Constitutional amendments (some of which would restructure the union in significant ways – and not all of which are as well thought out as I might wish), a dues hike, and other issues.

The candidates for *Industrial Worker* editor and General Secretary-Treasurer offer sharply different approaches to where our union should be headed. This election matters, and every member should be sure to get their ballot in by Dec. 12th.

## Help the work along

Regardless of the outcome, we still have a long road before us as we continue the work of building One Big Union capable of taking on the plutocrats who have mismanaged this planet and our working lives for so long.

We've made substantial progress in the past few years. The IWW is a lot bigger than it was, and we're a presence in a growing number of workplaces. But we've only just started in on the big job.

If we all chip in to talk to our fellow workers, to get IWW literature out on the job and in our communities, to build the union – together we will win.

Are you with us, fellow workers?

— Jon Bekken

# Union-busting a sacrament?

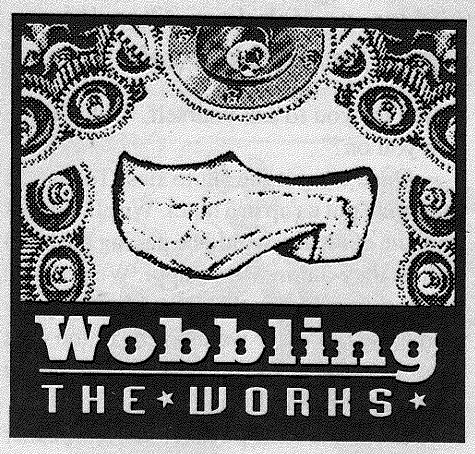
A California hospital owned by the Seventh-day Adventist church is citing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act as grounds for refusing to recognize a union of registered nurses. Three-quarters of the nurses at Ukiah Valley Medical Center have signed a petition calling for union representation.

The hospital is owned by Adventist Health, one of California's largest health care chains and part of the church's 159 facilities worldwide.

The Adventist church prohibits its 10 million members from belonging to labor unions which they say are "counter to Jesus' teachings." In a brief against the union recognition petition filed with the National Labor Relations Board, attorneys argued that "The Church believes that the self-sacrifice required for its healing mission is inherently incompatible with the economically self-serving goals of unions."

But "self-sacrifice" seems to be a one-sided notion for the Church. According to the California Nurses Association UVMC reported over $3 million in profits for 1997.

# Fighting racial discrimination




A couple of months ago, I discussed sexual discrimination, which is legally prohibited by Title VII of the 1964 Federal Civil Rights Act. Title VII also outlaws employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin or religion, and applies to all state and local employers and private-sector bosses that hire over 15 workers. The law is enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

A number of interesting court cases were decided last month connected to racial or ethnic discrimination.

Among them are two that I find incredibly disturbing which say that "stray remarks" do not constitute discrimination or significant evidence that discrimination might be occurring. I imagine that many of us have had the experience of working on a job when one of our co-workers decided it was safe to make a racist remark in our presence. Sometimes those remarks are uttered to the very people they are designed to offend and dehumanize. More often than not, these remarks are allowed to pass. But sometimes people complain, move through channels, and the action is punished. But the courts do not often recognize that racist sentiments can remain intact. When the remarks are not openly attached to a subsequent action, they may be deemed "stray" and the courts might uphold a firing which could have a racist undercurrent.

In a recent ruling in Jimmy Boyd v. State Farm Insurance Companies (this can be viewed on-line in its entirety at http://www.ca5.uscourts.gov/opinions/pub/97/97-11396-CV0.HTM) the Fifth Circuit Court, which covers northern Texas, rejected a discrimination suit which also contained a claim under the Family Medical Leave Act. Jimmy Boyd, an African American, was hired at State Farm in 1990. By 1994, Boyd had been promoted to Administrative Services Supervisor Level III.

One year prior, the person who hired Boyd, Bruce Sutton, a white man, called Boyd "Buckwheat" at a social event. "Buckwheat," a character from the Little Rascals television series, is considered to be a racial epithet in the context of employment discrimination law. At another time, Sutton called Boyd a "porch monkey." And a different person at the company told him, "State Farm does not hire many people like you... you should be happy just to be here."

In December 1994, Sutton gave Boyd an performance review which was not as favorable as previous reviews and he was denied a promotion. A few months after the review, after going through the company's internal channels, Boyd went to the EEOC to file a complaint for racial discrimination.

Two weeks after the complaint was filed, State Farm promoted a black woman to the same position Boyd was seeking. Right before Boyd filed with the EEOC, he requested a medical leave of absence for work under the FMLA. State Farm decided that letters from Boyd's psychologists were insufficient to support his leave of absence and order him to report back to work immediately. State Farm fired Boyd on the ninth day of being classified Absent Without Official Leave.

The court upheld the merits of the firing, and described the logic of the lower court: "The district court held that even if 'Porch Monkey' and 'Buckwheat' comments were assumed to be racist, the comments were merely stray remarks and did not imply discrimination. The district court rejected the remaining comments as self-serving and unsupported. Regarding the 1994 [performance review], the district court reasoned that the 'same actor' principle rebutted the inference that Sutton would discriminate against Boyd because Sutton was the same individual who initially hired Boyd."

It is quite easy to appreciate the obvious injustice in this ruling – even though Sutton hired Boyd, he still made racist remarks directed at him. Perhaps Sutton was so disgustingly sure of his superiority, both as a boss and because he was white, that he felt he could cavalierly refer to a fellow human being as "Buckwheat." If Boyd had not complained, would he have still been "ok" with Sutton? The turn of events in this case turns my stomach, and the ruling goes to show how clueless the courts and lawmakers are in how racism actually works in our society that they can not (or will not) craft adequate protections for workers.

A similar case decided last month was Jack Indurante v. Local 705, International Brotherhood of Teamsters (on-line at http://www.kentlaw.edu/7circuit/1998/nov/97-2733.html). Jack Indurante, an Italian, was working for the Teamsters as a business agent when the head of the Local, Daniel Ligurotis, was kicked out of his position by a court-appointed overseer for corruption. Shortly afterwards, the International installed new leadership in the Local, there was some shuffling around of positions, but eventually one of the appointees, Gerald Zero, was elected as head of the Local.

The new regime said they wanted to "clean house" and fired Indurante and five other business agents. But it's deeper: in affidavits submitted by Indurante and three of his former co-workers, a new officer of the local after the trusteeship went into effect said that "all the Italians were nothing but mobsters and gangsters." Other remarks like "the days of the goombahs are over" were also reported by workers represented by the Local when the new officers were campaigning at their workplace.

But again the court failed to link these statements to actions taken. From the decision: "To the extent that the remarks ought to refer to Indurante's termination, that would pose a problem for Indurante's case: the remarks of [the trusteeship officers] were not made to Indurante at all." The ruling notes that the remarks were made more than a year prior to the firing, and that the "goombah" remark was "not even made to employees of the Local and does not expressly refer to employment." Because Indurante was not singled out as a target, and because people of other ethnic backgrounds were fired at the same time, the court looked the other way.

The implication of this ruling, as noted in a dissenting opinion, is that "a remark akin to 'We're going to fire all the Blacks' or 'We're not going to hire any women' would not amount to direct evidence of discrimination solely because it does not single out the plaintiff for individual mention." Scary stuff.

The labor movement's almost exclusive reliance on legal remedies to solve discrimination needs a reality check. So far as the bosses are concerned, laws will allow racist remarks to be made with near impunity. Workers can be demoralized and alienated from each other, and the obvious benefit – being able to favor and reward one group of workers over another – guarantees that all of us working people are going to get the short end of the stick. It's time to throw our collective weight around, regardless of whether or not as individuals we are the immediate target. By organizing and making an injury to one an injury to all, the bosses will no longer feel safe in discriminating against any members of our class.

— Alexis Buss

*Wobbling the Works aims to help workers use their meager protections under U.S. labor law to make it safer to organize and undertake direct action for better conditions. If there is an issue you would like to see addressed, write FW Buss at PO Box 42531, Philadelphia PA 19101, or email phillyiww@iww.org*

## Direct Action Gets the Goods

## from the desk of...

Some issues just won't seem to go away:

Once again Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and co. were preparing to drop bombs on Iraq. Once again Saddam seems to have backed down at the last moment. But the sanctions continue. Iraqi civilians continue to die at a rate of more than 5,000 a month.

I keep looking for rational solutions to the world's problems while world leaders keep throwing out irrational ones. Ego is involved. Clinton et al. don't want to admit they've been one upped by Saddam. So why admit it? They're good at throwing positive spins on losing situations. Why not just declare victory, drop the murderous sanctions, and tend to business at home? That would seem a humane and rational solution to an inhumane and irrational situation. But it wouldn't resolve the lust of rulers for wealth and power; so the Iraq situation will probably be around to haunt us for a good while.

Once again Mumia Abu-Jamal is faced with imminent execution. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court flies in the face of overwhelming evidence that he has been denied a fair trial and refuses to send his case back to the lower courts for retrial. And Pennsylvania Governor Ridge is on record as promising to sign the death warrant when the state supreme court ruled. Time to hit the streets for justice once again.

Once again I have received a newsletter from Mike Griffin of the War Zone Education Foundation about the shenanigans of the United Paperworkers International Union. Mike was one of the stalwarts during the struggle a couple years back against A.E. Staley in Decatur, Illinois, a struggle which had the wholehearted support of the IWW. The loss of the struggle coincided with the absorption of the Staley workers' union, the Allied Industrial Workers of America, by the UPIU. In a perverted twist on the concept of One Big Union, a lot of the AFL-CIO unions move toward the OBU by consolidating rather than organizing.

Despite promises to the contrary, UPIU failed to provide the support necessary for the Staley workers to win their struggle. UPIU is another of those business unions which favors labor peace over justice and is willing to sign sweetheart contracts to achieve that peace. Tough luck for the workers who lose on the sellout agreements.

Once again the UPIU is about to absorb another relatively progressive union, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. There will be pay increases, boosts in benefit packages and a chance to assume higher positions for OCAW staffers in the deal, as there were for AIWA staffers earlier. That will be enough to inspire many, probably most, of the OCAW staffers to push for yes votes on the merger. $10,000 raises out of an AIWA $9 million strike fund in that absorption bought the support of AIWA staff. It didn't do much for the AIWA rank-and-file and it won't for the OCAW rank-and-file either.

UPIU is a top-down organization with a constitution which overrides any attempts to build rank-and-file democracy. After the AIW absorption Staley workers were denied the right to present charges against international officers of the UPIU to the convention. At the '96 convention the UPIU president told the delegates there were no charges pending. Late in the convention, the current president told delegates there were charges but they wouldn't be heard until the next convention, four years later. Six months later he declared the charges moot points.

Appeals to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney were denied. Sweeney has a history with the Staley workers. During his election campaign he promised to provide considerable support for the locked-out workers. Mike Griffin gave up a fast to the death in face of promises of support from Sweeney in the Staley struggle. The support was not forthcoming.

OCAW has a far better record than most U.S. business unions in supporting rank-and-file democracy, minority rights, women's rights and gay rights. UPIU has no such record. Black Staley "Road Warriors" were not welcomed at some southern UPIU locals in the midst of their struggle.

As Mike's newsletter points out, mergers for the most part are the result of failure of the business unions to organize and in some cases are driven by the greed of the union leaderships. UPIU has lost thousands of members in recent years, which Mike no doubt correctly attributes to the unwillingness of the union to fight for the rank-and-file. Mike said it better than I could: "Mergers are not the answer, it is union solidarity, it is empowering the rank and file... It is getting off their bureaucratic asses and getting this labor movement back into the streets where it belongs. A bad marriage is a bad marriage, and our hearts go out to the rank and file of the OCAW, as they walk down the aisle to disaster."

Wobblies will be in the streets against the bombing of Iraq if our murderous government officials try that again. We're already in the streets to fight the government attempts to murder Mumia Abu-Jamal. I have no doubt that we'll eventually be seeing folks like Mike Griffin from AIW and OCAW militants in the streets in front of UPIU headquarters to fight that union's lack of democracy. If they want the support of Wobblies, we'll be there. See you on the picket line.

— Fred Chase, General Secretary-Treasurer

# Riding a Wildcat Down

***12 hours on, then 12 hours off, seven days a week, this wildcat slave worked. The cat don't stop for a damn thing, no holidays, no sick days. The wildcat never rests in its pursuit for that black gold...***

Hand over hand, pulling myself up the derrick of a 90-foot wildcat oil rig. Each hand hold sticks to the frozen ladder as the rig shakes to the wildcat beat of drilling. The East Texas winter wind cuts through you with a vengeance that has no mercy for any fool that crosses its path. Finally reaching the crown, I knock off the ice that has accumulated, only to hear the toolpusher yell out that the feed pump has gone down. Back down the frozen ladder I go, to prime the pump that only seems to go down when I'm atop the cat's crown.

"Hey! mister pusherman, how does one take lunch on this rig?" "With one hand," he replies. 12 hours on, then 12 hours off, seven days a week, this wildcat slave worked. The cat don't stop for a damn thing, no holidays, no sick days. The wildcat never rests in its pursuit for that black gold. And the wildcat slave only has time to eat, sleep, shit and work, ain't no time or energy for much else. All this so that you good folks can drive your nice four-wheelers around. This ain't no life, the slave thinks, only a brutal means of survival.

I caught on to the wildcat in northern Mississippi after the cat hit an aquifer and the back pressure came up the hole and killed three slaves. The bossman needed replacement slaves and hired me on. We broke the cat down and hauled it off to East Texas. There we set the cat up to try again.

Most oil rigs have five stiffs per shift: a driller, two tongmen, one chainthrower and a derrick hand, who is also responsible for the pump. The man who runs the show is called the toolpusher.

The gangs of roughnecks that work oil rigs don't think much of intellectual fantasies of dream worlds, for the real world shakes them to the bone – a real world that others care not to see or think about. Have you ever given one moment of thought to what lies behind those things you spend your cash on? The roughneck, the truck driver, the sailor of the merchant marine, the factory worker down on the speedup line, the farm worker out in the fields, the miner down in some deep dark hole – all the slaves who endure hardship so that you may consume. Do you ever see the blood, the pain and the sweat that paints each thing you buy? Do you think about the sweatshop workers who make the clothes you wear? Or what of child labor? Do you think about the loss of their childhood when you buy the products they make? Do you hear the cries of Mother Earth when she is raped to support a lifestyle?

Many people just don't want to know about these things. Ignorance is bliss. Others just don't give a damn, no matter what you tell them. All they care about is what they have – to hell with everyone else. Some will respond by telling you how hard their life is. But in the reality of things, this system, which makes so many suffer, is only able to do this because we allow it .

Every person plays a part in the system of exploitation. And guilt lies in apathy and not doing anything about it. Do you really think you can escape the environmental disaster that this industrial system is creating by ignoring it? Do you realize that we humans are a part of the ecological system? And how we humans treat each other is a part of how we treat the environment. The system of exploitation treats people in the same way that it treats the rest of the ecological system.

The system likes to individualize our concerns so that we care only what happens to ourselves. It does not want you to understand that what happens to others and the rest of the ecological system has a direct effect on each of us.

The decision whether we are willing pawns of the system, or whether we are willing to do something about it, is ours alone to make. You can become a rebel, you can resist, you can fight back; you can join with others to set things right. You may be thinking; "what difference can I make?" The answer is in the realization that resistance to the system of exploitation is built one person at a time. You are either a part of the system, or a part of the resistance. There ain't no fence to sit on, there ain't no middle ground. In understanding this, the time has come for you to ask yourself, "Which side are you on?"

Once we got the rig to East Texas, the bossman put us up in a hotel. We all thought that the company would be paying the hotel bill as they did in Mississippi. We got paid every two weeks on this job, and our payday came the day after we arrived. In the next two weeks we set up the rig and began around the clock drilling.

Come the next payday, the toolpusher told us that the hotel had our checks and that we had to pay up our hotel bill out of them. This was a major problem for many of us because, as our money ran low, we charged our food on credit. This meant we had to pay both our food and hotel room bills at the same time. Most of us did not have enough money in our checks to do this.

As our anger grew, out of the hotel manager's office came the sheriff and a number of his deputies. He told us that if we had a problem with this he had jail cells for all of us. Then we were told to clear up our bills and to get the hell out of his county.

# The Wobbly

## News from IU 330-Construction Workers

### *Solidarity needed for Wayne Stanton*

## Fighting for a Democratic Iron Workers Union

On October 28, members of Iron Workers Local 86 rallied at their hall in support of Wayne Stanton. Stanton, a 25-year member of the Iron Workers union, has been brought up on charges and faces expulsion, suspension or a heavy fine.

Wayne's "crime" is standing up for his local's democratic rights.

Twice this year, members of Local 86 had turned down contracts negotiated by the Iron Worker's Union staff and the Employers Association. The first vote was defeated 839-411, a revised contract was voted down 649-521. Despite this vote, business agents for the Iron Workers Pacific Northwest District Council then signed an agreement with the employers' association. Copies of the signed contract are not yet available for union members.

In July, the Iron Workers International Union placed Mr. Stanton's local under receivership, thereby taking control of the treasury and removing all locally elected leadership. The International Union has discontinued the practice of local monthly meetings of the membership. It has sponsored no rank-and-file membership meetings of Local 86 since it was placed under receivership.

Concerned about this fundamental violation of union democracy and questioning the contract's validity, FW Stanton and three other union members sent a letter to the local employers' association, notifying them of the "no" vote on the contract. This letter, drafted by a lawyer, alerted the employers that the signed contract violates the Iron Workers' constitution and cautioned the Employers' Association of challenges to the contract and to "proceed at their own risk" in implementing the contract.

None of the other three men have been brought up on charges. They include a rank and file member and two former officers of the Local.

The Iron Workers' International has brought three charges against Stanton:

• "Incitement of dissatisfaction and dissension" by attending union-sanctioned rallies and gatherings.

• Threatening violence by telling Employers to "proceed at your own risk" when the letter specifically points out the legal challenges to the contract.

• Conduct interfering with working relationship with contractors.

At the same time the International:

• Is denying Stanton to present witnesses of his choice on his behalf (The international insists only members of the Iron Workers union can be witnesses),

• Has not detailed or explained to Stanton the vague "inciting dissension and dissatisfaction" charges that are being brought against him,

• Is denying Stanton's request to review the evidence that will be brought against him,

• Has not called a 12-member jury of his local-union peers, despite the fact that such a jury is guaranteed by the union's constitution, and

• Is selecting its own representative to preside over the trial-hearing.

"My international union is accusing me of 'inciting dissension and dissatisfaction.' How ironic," said Stanton. "All of the 'dissension and dissatisfaction' among the union members has been caused by the international union and the local union staff. They presented unacceptable contract offers to the members twice this year. And when members twice voted it down, the union signed the contract anyway. Now that's plenty reason for members to feel deeply dissatisfied."

The IWW has always fought for union democracy. One of the best ways of guaranteeing this right is to protest loudly whenever democracy is violated. Protests regarding Wayne Stanton's treatment can be sent to: Joe Ward, Iron Workers Union Local 86, 4550 S. 134th Pl #102, Tukwilla WA 98168

Copies of protest letters, letters of solidarity and legal fund contributions can be sent to: Seattle Iron Workers' Legal Fund, POB 5854, Lynwood WA 98046-0854

### On the Road?

Remember the IWW is the One Big Union. Get involved where-ever you are by contacting the local IU 330 delegate listed below or General Membership Branch listed on page 2 of this newspaper.

**Internet:** Portland IU 330 Branch is maintaining a World-Wide Web page at: www.teleport.com/~obu/bcwiu

### IU 330 Delegates & Contacts

IWW Delegates can sign up new members and take dues. If you are already a member consider becoming a delegate by contacting IWW Headquarters.

#### UK

For contacts ring the IWW on 0116-266-1835

#### USA

Boston: Mark Dupont 508/584-9881
Butte: Dennis Georg 406/494-5837 e-mail: dengeo@montana.com
Chicago: phone/fax 708/482 7055 e-mail: IWW330Chgo@aol.com
Detroit: Bernard Labowitch 313/875-6407
Denver: Bob Madsen 303/823-6091
W. Michigan/N. Indiana: Patrick Klocke 616/649-1214
Monterey, CA: Ray Brown, 1240 3rd St. 93940
Portland, OR IU330 Branch: Steve 503/408-8809 e-mail:obu@teleport.com
Richmond, VA: Tom Williams 804/285-3699
Seattle/Tacoma: Mark Johnson 206/935-9012
Sedro-Wolley, WA IU330 Branch: 360/855-0914
St. Louis: Tom Madden 314/647-2093

### Got News?

Contact Wobbly editor Morgan Miller at 503/650-7187 or obu@teleport.com

## Irish building workers wildcat

Wildcat strikes and road blockades spread throughout Ireland in late October after the jailing of two building workers for their role in a direct action campaign that has been targeting gyppo contractors.

Hundreds of workers surrounded Mountjoy prison, where the two were held, and blocked streets in downtown Dublin. Construction sites across Dublin were closed as workers headed to court. Construction workers in other cities across Ireland had downed tools by Oct. 23 in solidarity with David McMahon and William Rogers.

Several years ago construction firms began to replace directly employed workers with contractors. Workers were forced into taking a special tax arrangement for "self-employed" contractors. Most building workers were paid 'cash-in-hand,' and their unions were decimated. Being 'off the books,' workers are not insured, and do not receive holiday pay, travel time, unemployment or retirement benefits or any of the other hard-won rights that directly employed workers can expect.

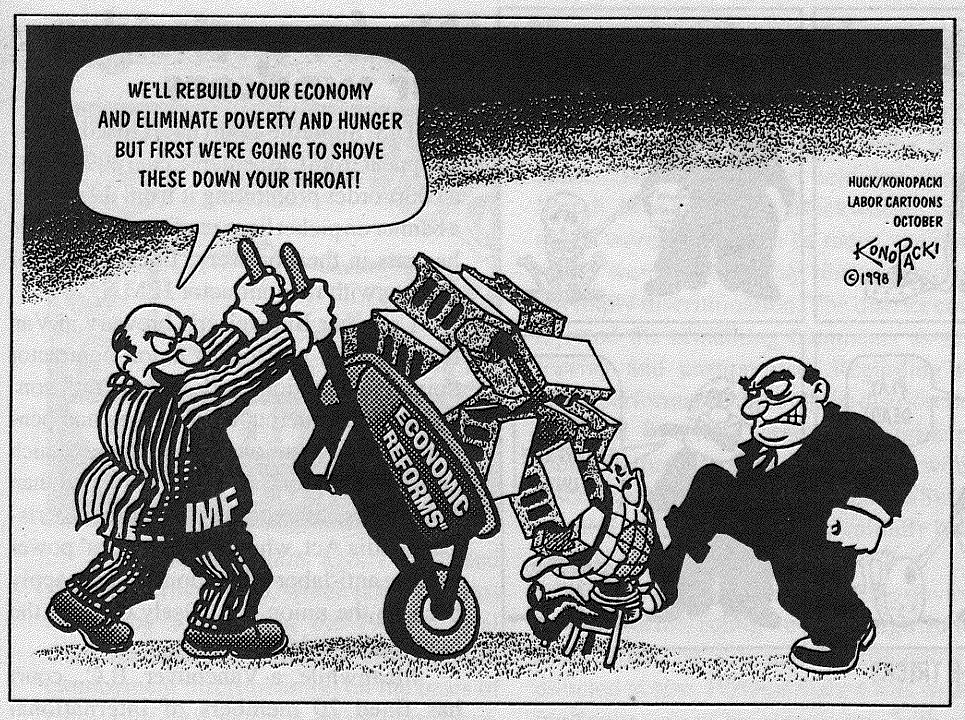
Safety conditions have also deteriorated. In the years 1995-1997 alone, 40 workers were killed on job sites. Back in the 1980s, when most workers were directly employed, there were only six fatal accidents in the whole decade.

Recently building workers have found an effective way to fight back. Because injunctions would be given by the courts if they took action through their unions they formed an informal organisation called Building Workers against the Black Economy which picketed firms that refused to directly employ workers. Several victories were won in Dublin and the movement spread to other areas of the country.

In October one such firm, Capel Developments, brought McMahon and Rogers (a bricklayer and a labourer) to court, demanding that they be jailed for refusing to obey a court injunction forbidding them from picketing a Capel site. Police reinforcement's had to be called to get the two out of the court through more then 200 building workers who had turned up to support them.

When the two were returned to court after a night in jail and asked to apologise to the bosses, about 50 of their fellow workers at the back of the court started shouting "never say sorry!" The judge then ordered the court cleared.

— Andrew Flood for A-Infos




Since this forced us all to 'quit,' the boss did not have to pay us off for another two weeks, until the next payday. But he offered to advance us money out of that check to pay our bills if we agreed to leave town. Being a bit of a rebel worker, I was rather vocal about this arrangement. The porkers told me that if I did not shut my mouth, pay my bill and get the hell out of his county, my family, which was with me, would join me in jail.

This whole scam was planned by the company to save them money. In Mississippi the company was unable to get experienced roughnecks. So they had to bring them in from the outside and put them up in a hotel. In East Texas they had two weeks to find a completely new crew. Which they were able to do. Since we did not have a contract or any written agreement, there was nothing we could do about this.

After my bill was paid up, I loaded my family and our few belongings in to our old pickup truck and we made our way down the highway. We were given an escort to the county line by one of the deputies. Once at the county line, he pulled us over and gave me a lecture about my big mouth and bad attitude. He then told us that if he ever saw us in his county again he would throw us all in jail.

Behind everything you buy, there are stories about exploited workers. My story is but one among millions that could be told. The next time you pull up for a tank of gas, remember my story, and think about all the stories still untold, that went into producing the fuel for your car. And if you are able to do this, then you have taken a step in understanding the truth about the world we live in.

— Arthur J Miller

# ABC-Disney locks out workers

Disney-owned ABC television locked out 2,200 of its unionized, off-camera workers Nov. 11. The workers had walked out earlier that day in a 24-hour unfair labor practices strike to protest ABC's demand that union negotiators accept, sight unseen, its proffered medical care package.

The technicians, editors, camera people, producers and desk assistants represented by the National Association of Broadcast Employees (NABET) in New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles have been working without a contract for 19 months. Ads on the back of many Chicago buses have promoted a boycott of ABC Channel 7 for several months.

Strikers in Chicago told an *IW* reporter that they believe management's refusal to show them the details of the Walt Disney health plan management wants them to switch to represents a failure to negotiate in good faith. The timing of the strike, the day before the elections, may have been chosen to put maximum pressure on the company to settle quickly.

A company mouthpiece declared that ABC would not allow its programming to be "held hostage to the sneak attacks by the union," and demanded that the union agree to give 72-hour warnings of any future job actions before the locked-out workers would be allowed to return to work.

In the meantime, management, on-air talent and shipped-in scabs were staffing the cameras, which the reporters and anchors represented by the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists have so far refused to touch. Some politicians and other scheduled guests have also refused to cross the picket lines to appear on ABC programs. Viewers of Channel 7 in Chicago have been seeing odd camera shots and misplaced graphics as a result.

— Penny Pixler

# Mexican unionists tour Midwest

Two rank-and-file leaders of the Mexican labor federation, the Authentic Labor Front (FAT) toured the United Electrical Workers' District 11 between Oct. 10 and 18.

Juan Sauza, production coordinator at a worker-owned window glass cooperative near Mexico City, and Gilberto Martinez, general secretary of a metalworkers' local in Aguascalientes, shared their experiences with UE members and other unionists and students. Both plants had been represented by the CTM (the largest of Mexico's government-controlled labor federations), and both had been active in the successful struggles to form independent unions, run by the workers and affiliated with the FAT.

The FAT members spoke at labor and community meetings throughout the Midwest. In Iowa City, they spent several days with the UE-affiliated union representing teaching assistants at the University of Iowa, speaking with union members and to several classes as well as travelling to a nearby town where several Mexican workers are employed at a meat packing plant.

In Des Moines, they visited a United Steel Workers picketline at Titan Tire, where workers have been on strike since May 1st. They enjoyed an enthusiastic reception from the strikers, especially when Fellow Worker Sauza told them his own story: His plant had been represented by the CTM when workers decided to organize an independent union. Although workers were intimidated and some even kidnapped, they ultimately succeeded in forming an independent union.

However, after six years the company saw a decline in profits and began to take equipment from the plant. The final straw was when they failed to pay workers for two weeks. Seeing no alternative, the workers struck. The plant remained closed for three years, and was ultimately abandoned. The workers decided that rather than sell the plant and divide the money, they would operate it as a cooperative. Although they were ridiculed by the government for their decision, they have successfully operated the plant for 14 years.

From Des Moines they continued on to Minneapolis for the UE District 11 Council meeting, where Gilberto Martinez explained why workers in his plant had decided to organize an independent union, and described a recent attempt by the CTM to once again control the plant. Workers voted against the CTM, 240 to 1!

He also spoke of a campaign currently underway in Aguascalientes. Women who had formerly worked in his plant came back for help when management at their new job announced plans for lay-offs and the CTM "union" officials were too busy to address their concerns. The women decided that they should also form an independent union.

When the company learned of the campaign, it fired a number of women, including one whom they believed to be one of the leaders. After interrogating her for hours with no success, they handed her a blank check and told her that she could fill in any amount she wanted – provided that she gave them the names of those supporting the drive for an independent union. There was silence in the room as Gilberto said: "She picked up the pen and wrote the following: 'I want my rights as a woman, my rights as a worker, dignity, respect, higher wages, and daycare...'"

— Robin Alexander,
*Mexican Labor News and Analysis*
http://www.igc.apc. org/unitedelect/
103144.2651@compuserve.com

# Wobblies sponsor Chiapas contingent

*continued from page 1*

work as hard. We are the ones who can't use an axe properly. We are the ones who arrive used to a relative luxury. And we are the ones who leave.

A contingent of Detroit Wobblies is returning to the region of Southern Chiapas in January for a period of six months. There has been much discussion on the possibility of setting up another solidarity encampment in one of the hundreds of other communities in the region. An IWW encampment would differ from other solidarity projects in that it would (hopefully) be a joint project with the FAT unionists in Mexico City. Discussions between IWW and FAT are planned to figure out a coherent plan of action, as well as to develop a mission statement that will then be brought to Chiapas and reworked to meet the specific needs of the indigenous people who live there.

The idea, as it now stands, would be for Wobblies from all over the world to go to Mexico and network with the syndicalists in Mexico City and from there depart to Chiapas. It would be an invaluable opportunity to be acquainted with a community of industrial unionists just south of our border (who could go on to be close friends and allies), as well as to bring our skills to the highlands of Chiapas on an even exchange.

The project will be more solidified in the coming year and more information will definitely be made available. The IWW is well known in the region due to a steady influx of Wobblies and discussions with organizers. A continued presence would be an invaluable experience and opportunity for us as individuals, as well as a union.

The crisis in Chiapas erupted when the Zapatista resistance movement rose up on January 1, 1994. That day, NAFTA – the free trade agreement among Mexico, Canada and the U.S. – took effect. In the tradition of Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, thousands of Indians marched on the capital of Chiapas demanding land, justice and democracy. The Zapatistas chose this date because economic policies like NAFTA, which deregulate business and cut the social safety net, have drastically lowered living conditions for the poor majority. This uprising made the oppression in Chiapas known around the world.

After the initial conflict, the international spotlight forced the government to agree to peace accords giving autonomy to Indian villages and ending military actions against the EZLN (the Zapatista army).

However, the government has refused to implement the peace accords. In fact, supporters of the ruling party have entered a new phase of counter-insurgency warfare, creating paramilitary groups from poor indigenous people enticed by prospects of money and authority. Training and equipment are provided for terrorist acts against villages including house raids, land evictions, forced labor, rape and murder.

Over 1,500 people have been killed by these paramilitary groups in the last two years; another 20,000 people have been forced to abandon their homes and farms.

## Viva EZLN t-shirts

To raise funds for Wob aid to Chiapas. $12 each (Large only) from Detroit GMB, PO Box 44558, Detroit MI 48232-9995.

## Teachers storm Senate

Protesting teachers stormed the Mexican Senate Nov. 11 and held its president, Maria de los Angeles Moreno, and four other senators hostage for several hours, demanding recognition from a national teachers' union for their dissident local. 300 teachers clashed with security guards, broke down doors and smashed windows in the Senate building.

# Solidarity with Axiohm workers

Philadelphia Wobs traveled to Axiohm headquarters in Blue Bell, Penn., Nov. 20th in solidarity with workers in Tijuana.

Workers at the Axiohm factory in Tijuana (which produces printer devices for ATM and lottery ticket machines) won an appeal in Mexican federal court Oct. 14.

The 350 Axiohm workers had voted to be represented by the October 6 independent union founded by the Han Young workers. When they submitted a contract to their employer, the Tijuana labor board said the October 6 union didn't have to be recognized for negotiation purposes because another union might want to represent them, which was patently absurd. The workers appealed the decision and won. Technically, now the labor board should insist on negotiations between the company and the workers, but so far the workers haven't heard a response from the labor board.

On Oct. 20 Mexican judicial police sought to arrest Enrique Hernandez, who is the general secretary of the October 6 independent union (which represents the Han Young workers) and one of the presidents of the Baja state National Union of Workers (UNT, a national federation of independent unions and unions that have broken off from the CTM, the largest government-affiliated labor federation in Mexico). Police also sought to arrest Jose Angel Penaflor, the attorney for the October 6 union. Neither man was in the office at the time the police arrived (and tried to arrest Jose Angel's brother, mistaking him for Jose Angel).

When the Han Young workers went on strike in May, warrants were issued for the arrest of Hernandez and Penaflor based on a ridiculous and completely false claim that they had forcibly detained the manager of the Han Young factory. The union secured an injunction preventing the arrests. However, such relief is time-limited and the injunctions expired a few weeks ago.

# Marching on the Pentagon

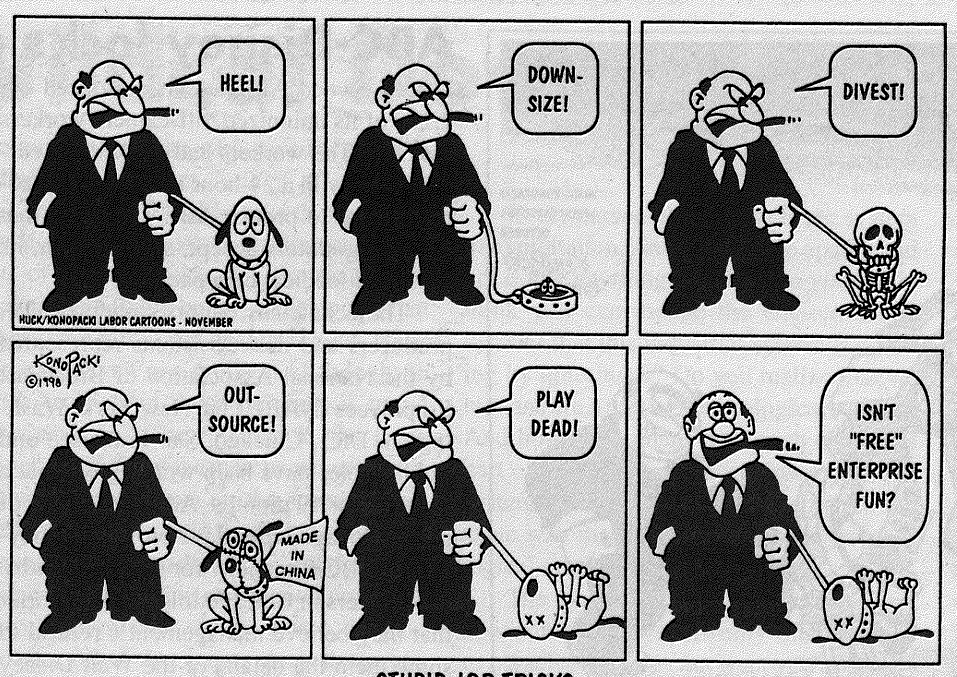
As six hundred demonstrators approached the Pentagon, holding banners and signs denouncing the U.S. military, dozens of helmeted riot police lined the stairs along one side of the massive building.

With a helicopter hovering overhead, and several others flitting quickly around the five-sided edifice, the Pentagon had been placed on alert. The whole scene brought back pleasant memories of the 1960s. Although the War Resisters League action of October 19 provided a good start, we have a long way to go.

A long list of speakers followed the march, expressing their indignation at the bloated military budget, and pointing out the necessity of diverting these funds to essential social services.

Yet no one presented a concrete demand, a call for a rapid cut of 90% in the military budget, with the hundreds of billions thus saved to be used for schools, hospitals, mass transit systems and low-cost housing. No one highlighted the role of President Clinton and his Democratic Party minions in the bipartisan deals that have resulted in a current military budget of $270 billion. None of the speakers pointed out that wars are endemic to a capitalist society, and that a truly anti-militarist movement would be calling for a total transformation of the current system in which a few transnational corporations hold all the power into one based on the social ownership of the means of production with decentralized planning and worker control.

The IWW has always seen the workplace as the central focus for the movement toward a cooperative commonwealth. Nevertheless, we still need to work with other activists within wider social movements, such as the battle to slash the military budget. The War Resisters League is proposing to organize a series of local actions for the fall of 1999. Let's work to build these demonstrations while presenting a radical, anti-capitalist perspective.



STUPID JOB TRICKS

# McDonald's strike

Eight McDonald's workers in Burke, Virginia, won a six-day strike Oct. 22, after regional executives agreed to address their concerns over short staffing and management abuse. McDonald's dispatched executives from their regional headquarters 45 minutes after the picket lines went up, to begin negotiations with the mostly teenaged workers.

Workers (who are not affiliated to any union) complained that areas that are supposed to have three workers on shift often have only one, making working conditions intolerable. Meanwhile, managers have been scheduling workers for short hours and refusing to pay them when they are called in to work and then told they won't be needed.

Workers also demanded that full-time workers be granted paid vacation time after a year on the job. McDonald's did not grant that demand, but did agree to higher staffing levels and to review pay levels.

"We are going to stay with it until things change," striker Josh Whitman said. "We're not getting paid enough to do the work of three people."

Meanwhile, a McDonald's worker was fired in Jacksonville, Texas, after refusing management's demand that he remove a yellow ribbon he was wearing in memory of Matthew Shepard, the Wyoming student recently beaten to death by gay bashers.

**SUPPORT THE WORKERS' PRESS**

**Contribute to the IW Sustaining Fund**

# Bye-bye Harris

Nearly 12,000 people attended a rally and march in Ottawa Oct. 17 to protest the devastation-agenda of the Ontario provincial 'Progressive Conservative' party and to wish premier Mike Harris good-bye. We marched from Majors Hill park next to the Parliament buildings, down past the convention centre.

Marchers were generally organised by trade, including auto workers, teachers, service, postal and public employees, among many others. Barricades had been erected along the march route alongside the convention centre and were manned by a solid line of blue-sweatshirt and white 'marshal' hat-wearing proto-cops who yelled at those who stopped to voice their dissent to move on. They had been specially trained at a police-hosted dinner the week before. Behind them was a line of drab gun-metal-grey uniformed Special Response team officers and the odd 'Military Police' officer.

One marshal, when told that we were here to effect progressive change and that since the cronies and oligarchs who had seized power were all gathered behind the glass walls of the conference centre it was ridiculous to ask people move on, told us ""keep going ... change is down that way [pointing further down the parade route]."

Eventually, the more radical activists were bullied into moving on. You could tell as soon as the parade route had passed out of the secured area, as all signs of the police disappeared, and at one point, helpful activists even organized the clearance of a blocked road themselves to allow an ambulance to come through. The march wound up in another park on the other side of the canal, with more speeches and songs.

At this point, we headed back over to the conference centre, though we were delayed on the way by the marshals who tried to tell us to head back to the park. As we passed them, I asked the marshals what their intended purpose was to which one responded that they were just trying to delay us so that the cops could set the barricades back up. As we were heading back over to in front of the conference centre, we also passed a dozen Grey cops frantically pulling batons, shields and helmets from the bottom storage compartments of a large, rented Greyhound bus.

In front of the conference centre, we held a more vocal protest, including a crowd-favorite chant: 'Paris is burning, Ontario is learning' (in reference to riotous Paris high-school student demonstrations of a few days before). Speakers talked of the CFS demands for tuition freeze, renewed funding and the transformation of the so-called 'millennium fund' into a solid grant program based on need. Several speakers also spoke of the growing cooperation between the student movement and labour and human rights groups, including an organiser with the Eaton's picket in solidarity with the UNITE 1764 workers.

We were interrupted by one of the power-tripping marshals who told us they had invited a UNITE speaker to address the other crowd down at the park. (We later learned that the organisers had barred the UNITE speakers and student activists from taking to the stage to prevent them from announcing the renewed demonstration in front of the Congress Centre.) The marshal then asked how come we weren't at the other stage listening to them. The protesters responded with a loud and spontaneous roar of "Sol, Sol, Sol, Solidarite!"

Afterwards, we headed over to picket Eaton's and encourage mallgoers to boycott them until they cease purchasing scab-made socks from the J.B. Fields factory in Trenton. Women garment-workers there were abandoned by their male counterparts during collective bargaining when the owners offered them a 4% pay cut (which they accepted) vs. the 20% pay cut offered the women. The women were on strike for six months, after which, due to changes in labour laws by the Harris government, they were fired and replaced. Eaton's continues to purchase the socks made by the scab-labour.

# AFL-CIO chief embraces bosses

"Your success is our success," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told the board of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Nov. 11, "and we can help you compete if you'll give us half a chance."

Sweeney had been invited to meet with the board to discuss ways the AFL-CIO and the chamber could work together on legislative and regulatory matters. He did criticize business leaders for their anti-union policies and their failure to more actively cooperate with unions.

Chamber President Thomas Donahue will appear before the AFL-CIO's executive council at its annual midwinter meeting in Miami Beach in February.

Rank-and-file workers who worry at the prospect of union officers embracing the employing class even more closely might want to consider building a genuine, working-class union – a union that recognizes (in the words of the IWW Preamble) that, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common."

## Homecare workers demand higher pay

Activists from ACORN joined homecare workers represented by Service Employees International Union Local 800 in a march through Chicago's central business Loop Oct. 1, demanding higher wages. Most union homecare workers make between $5.15 and $6.25 an hour, beating out childcare workers for the dubious distinction of being the lowest-paid profession.

# No free speech for workers

The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear an appeal from Carpenters Local 209 against a court order prohibiting it from displaying a banner on picket lines reading: "Budweiser has rats in their brewery: Local 209 labor dispute with rat contractor H.M.S."

Last year Budweiser's brewery in Van Nuys, Calif., replaced a union contractor doing construction work with a "rat" contractor that undercut union wages and benefits. Although unions have referred to such cut-rate operators as "rats" for more than 100 years, the court said the Norris-LaGuardia Act, which limits judges' power to issue anti-labor injunctions, did not apply because the union had falsely claimed the plant had a rodent problem.

Meanwhile, a Vancouver, B.C., court has fined 20 members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 518 more than $15,000 for picketing against Sultrans Inc. after it awarded a contract for sampling sulphur to Certispec, a non-union company. The work had been done by ILWU members for many years, and the union and its members allegedly ignored an injunctions prohibiting picketing and other industrial action.

President Barry Holloway said, "My members have already lost their jobs and they will go to jail rather than pay the fines."

## Sweetheart deal in Hawaii

When workers at Honolulu Disposal Service, one of the state's largest garbage haulers, filed for union representation last year, they were shocked to learn that they had been represented by Laborers Local 368 for more than 17 years. While the contract was renewed five times, workers were never told of its existence or permitted to vote on the agreement.

Honolulu Disposal used the Laborers' pact to qualify to work on large unionized construction projects while not providing union benefits. The missing benefits included overtime pay, paid holidays and vacations, travel benefits, contributions to union pension and welfare trust funds, job protection and grievance procedures,.

## National Trend

One half of all new jobs created in manufacturing in the U.S. are temporary.

## Air controllers halt dangerous scheme

Under an experimental Federal Aviation Administration program, for two hours each day planes approaching Chicago's busy OHare airport were "piggybacked" with faster planes flying above slower planes in the airlanes. On Nov. 2 the Extended Compressed Arrival Procedures plan, designed to get more planes on the ground faster, was ordered into effect 16 hours a day.

Air traffic controllers said malfunctions of both aging hardware and new software made the new plan too risky and threatened to defeat it by adding bigger buffer zones between the planes. FAA officials then promised the controllers blanket immunity from reprimands or dismissals if under the new program they committed errors that placed planes too close to one another in the sky. National Air Traffic Controllers Union officials leaked word of the plan, and the next day the government suspended the program.

It's good to see that air controllers have recovered enough from Reagan's smashing of the PATCO union to resist dangerous speed-ups. Still, the load levels at OHare are more than a worker-management problem. The entire U.S. transportation system, which has favored high resource consuming air transport over lower resource consuming rail transport even for relatively short distances such as Chicago to Minneapolis or St. Louis, is flawed.

## Volvo workers end blockade

Volvo workers blockaded an assembly plant in Halifax for three days in late October, until company managers agreed to negotiate over a severance offer. Volvo is planning to shut down the plant Dec. 18, laying off 228 workers.

About 30 workers took over the plant, staging a work stoppage and blockade in an effort to improve a "Mickey Mouse" offer of two weeks' severance pay for each year on the job (up to 40 weeks) and discontinued health benefits. "It's sad that a company that demanded so much loyalty from its workers has so little to offer in return," said Phil Sanderson, who has worked for the plant for 31 years.

The union is demanding that the plant be kept open until spring to allow time to find alternative uses for it, and to improve the severance package.

## General strikes against austerity

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions kicked off a series of weekly general strikes Nov. 11 to protest a recent fuel hike of 67 percent and the subsequent increase in prices of most basic commodities.

Zimbabwe's industries and streets were deserted as hordes of riot police, army and members of the Central Intelligence (CIO) prevented demonstrations.

Streets were reduced to ghost towns across the country. Those who insisted on going to work found doors at their workplaces locked or were turned away by employees. Most government workers joined the strike despite warnings that they would be fired for doing so.

The government is pushing in parliament a bill that will make it illegal for anyone to stage a demonstration without police permission. However, the ZCTU has vowed to continue with its one-day stayaways every Wednesday, until the government addresses the plight of workers.

## Chinese workers demand pay

Hundreds of state workers scuffled with police in China's Sichuan province after mounting a protest along a railway line to demand unpaid salaries. At least 15 people were arrested in the Oct. 21 confrontation. 500 workers from the state-owned Peijiang iron and steel factory in Jiangyou town, who were owed three months' pay, occupied a station along the Baocheng railway line for four hours, disrupting at least 10 trains. More than 100 police broke up the protest and a scuffle ensued.

## Belarus arrests

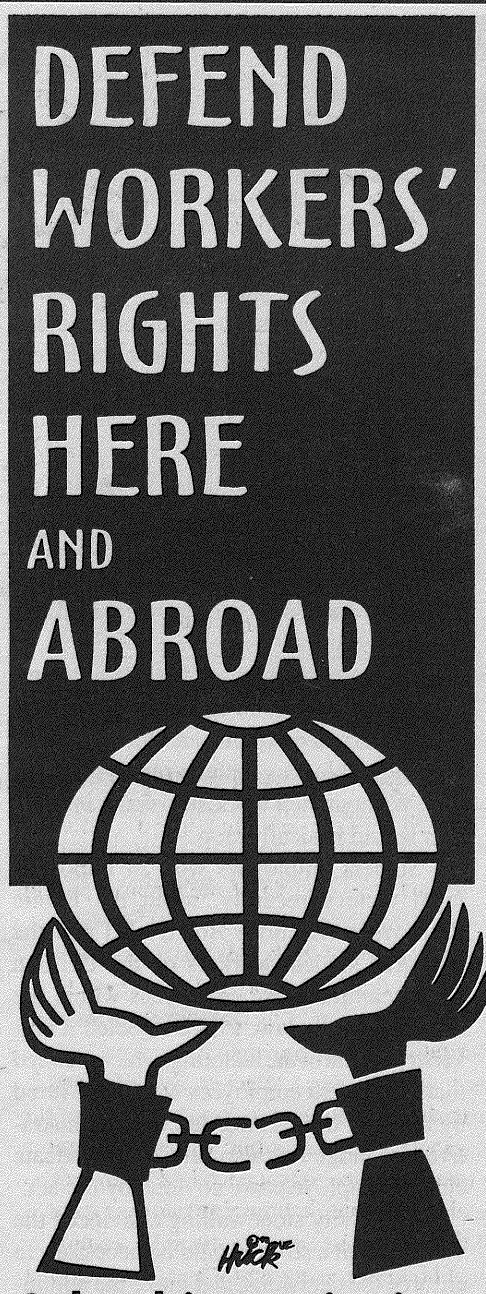
Seven unionists were arrested Nov. 5 as they were about to hand over a letter to the authorities setting out their pay claims and demands for better working conditions.

The presentation culminated a demonstration organised by independent unions in the Belarussian capital, Minsk. The 2,000 workers who took part also called for the resignation of President Lukashenko.

"The current regime has brought us to poverty," stated the president of the independent mineworkers' union of Soligorsk, Victor Babaed. The average monthly salary in Belarus is $25 and many workers have only $15 a month to survive on. The economic crisis in Russia, which accounts for 70 percent of Belarus's foreign trade, has further exacerbated the situation.

### Russian students protest

Students across Russia took to the streets Oct. 1 to demand payment of delayed grants and cheaper education, as well as President Yeltsin's resignation and a change of the country's economic course. The student union in St. Petersburg said 42 of the city's institutions of higher learning were represented among the 4,000 marchers. In the former Soviet Union education was free, and most universities still offer classes for very little. But user-paid education is becoming increasingly common and even if there is no tuition charge, students now have to pay for books and accommodations.




## Colombian unionists assassinated

In the course of a 20-day strike by Colombia's state workers, seven unionists were assassinated, including Jorge Ortega, vice president of CUT, Colombia's largest union, Hortensia Alfaro, leader of the health union in the northern department of Guajira, and Jairo Cruz, the president of the Indupalma Union in the northern department of Cesar.

Rallies and marches ended in violent clashes with police. The strike, the longest in Colombian history, was settled Oct. 27 when union negotiators wrung from the government wage hikes targeted to workers at the bottom of the pay scale.

Eighty workers dismissed due to the strike will be reinstated, and disciplinary action to be meted out to another 1,800 will be suspended. The unions were unable to win a halt to the government austerity plan, which involves privatization of state-owned companies and deep cuts in public spending.

Thousands of Colombian unionists and other social activists have been murdered in recent years. Many others have been seriously assaulted and so, in some cases, have

### Repression in Korea

The president of the largest union in South Korea, Dan Byung-ho (head of the Metal Workers Federation and vice president of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions) was arrested Oct. 19 by police and dragged off into custody for his role organizing the general strikes in May and July this year.

## Syndicalists fight privatization

Due to the city government's privatisation policies working conditions in Stockholm's subway system (SL Tunnelbana AB) have deteriorated enormously. The responsibility for public transport is currently auctioned off to the lowest bidder, with serious repercussions for both subway personnel and passengers. Longer working hours, extensive personnel shortages and a harmful working environment are only samples of the terrible effects upon subway workers.

We, the independently organised syndicalists working at SL Tunnelbana AB, have been bargaining with our employer for amongst other things, shorter on duty working passes, better train maintenance and increased hiring of personnel. Subway engineers have taken a further step by duly notifying SL Tunnelbana of possible point-strikes in the flow of traffic.

The strike notification is to eventually be expanded to include ticket personnel in the subway section of the Stockholm Local Federation (LS) of our revolutionary syndicalist union, the Central Organisation of Swedish Workers (SAC). In solidarity, our commuter train section has already given strike notice. In response, SL Tunnelbana AB has ignored our most important demands and locked us out from our workplaces from the 9th of November and the following two weeks, which was the time span that our point strikes were to occur.

Public Transportation is a necessity of life for many people and we do not plan on standing idly by while it is butchered in the name of economic interests!

While we are locked-out, we will focus our efforts on informing our co-workers organised in the dominant reformist union, LO, about the current state of events in our struggle as well as distributing information to passengers explaining the real reasons for delays and other problems within the subway system.

We ask for your solidarity in this conflict. Please contact our employer: SL Tunnelbana AB, Box 1222, S-111 82 Stockholm, Sweden fax: +(46)-8-686 12 82 <tunnelbana@swipnet.se>

— Tunnelbanesektionen, SAC

### That's capitalism

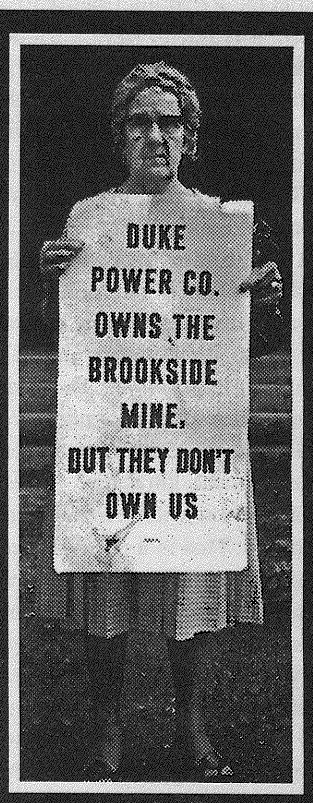
A man who saved two co-workers from an explosion and fire in Nike's Garuda factory in Indonesia and who suffered extensive burns in the process was fired for his efforts. Instead of a hero's welcome, Kusnadi received a reprimand when he returned to the plant after hospitalization. The supervisor told him "it's not our business if you try to help your friends."

After a newspaper reporter brought the story to Nike's attention, a company representative tracked down Kusnadi – 21 months after the Sept. 11 1996 fire – and presented him with $91 for unreimbursed expenses. Hooray!

*— Workers Solidarity*

### Death Row Survivors Meet

29 people who have been proven innocent and released after being sentenced to death by U.S. courts met in Chicago Nov. 14 to speak out against the death penalty.

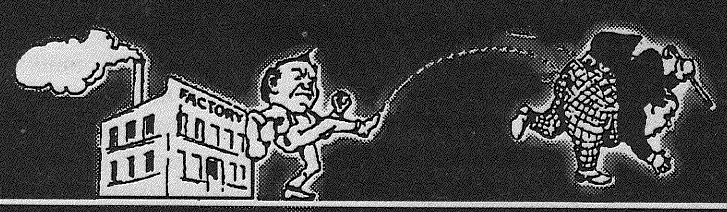

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# Education Workers

## Education, Not Incarceration

Five thousand students from high schools all over the San Francisco Bay Area walked out of class Oct. 1 to demand money for schools, not jails. The students gathered near a public-transit stop in San Leandro in the mid-morning and then took to the streets chanting "Education, not incarceration!"

California spends $60,000 to put a person behind bars but only $8,000 on an education. More than 50 times as many blacks are in prisons as in colleges.

## Organizing Part-Timers

The Boston GMB organized a Nov. 4 talk on organizing part-time (adjunct) faculty, featuring two NEA activists from the University of Massachusetts Boston who recently waged a largely successful struggle to force the "union" which had represented them for the past 21 years to actually demand and fight for better conditions. They stressed the need to organize industrially, on a rank-and-file basis without a separate caste of officers, and municipally, rather than on a job-by-job basis.

A lively discussion afterwards had to be cut off as we only had the hall for three hours. Boston Wobs are talking with adjuncts at two colleges who are interested in unionizing, and will be joining the planning committee organizing a national conference on adjunct teachers for this Spring.

## U Cal TAs may strike

Graduate student employees at the eight campuses of the University of California have announced that they will be going out on strike in the near future unless administrators agree to begin negotiations.

The UAW, which represents over 9,000 teaching assistants and other graduate employees, has said it will pay strike benefits if a walk-out proves necessary. The announcement should give pause to UC administrators, as it makes a strike much more likely. Since last May, graduate student employees on all the eight campuses have voted to strike by an 87 percent margin.

Graduate student employees carry a great deal of the teaching load at the university. While professors in many courses lecture to audiences numbering in the hundreds, teaching assistants provide instruction, hold discussions and answer questions in the smaller sessions between lectures, as well as grading papers and monitoring student performance. In many cases, associates teach their own courses. Other graduate student employees include readers and tutors. Without their work, university instruction would basically stop.

Student employees won an important legal victory recently, when the Public Employees Relations Board held that the 500 grad student workers on the UC San Diego campus were employees within the meaning of the law. PERB rejected a university appeal of the balloting, which claimed that the student employees weren't covered by the law. In Los Angeles, an administrative law judge has also ruled that graduate student employees are covered by the act.

University stonewalling convinced the workers that a strike would be necessary to enforce the decisions, and make the administration bargain. A series of rolling one-day strikes last year failed to move UC's bosses.

# A failed prescription

# Book Review

Give Me Liberty! by Gerry Spence. St. Martin's Press, 1998, $24.95.

There can be no doubt of Gerry Spence's sincerity. He is genuinely alarmed at the reduction of a once-free people to slavery – not literal chattel slavery, but the wage slavery of our time. "The way out of the slave quarters," he proclaims, "is to discover that we are all in the slave quarters together."

Unfortunately, Spence's book is also an excellent example of what often happens when well-meaning writers follow their messianic urges into the arena of social reform without a firm grounding in progressive politics: These would-be saviors wind up mired in their own contradictions, struggling to reinvent the wheel and accomplishing very little.

Fifty pages are expended describing the horrors of chattel slavery, as though the Myth of the South with happy slaves toiling in the cotton fields under the benevolent gaze of "ol' massa" still had a substantial following. The wage slavery that has taken its place is described, but not analyzed nearly so well. The "New Master," Spence says, is now everywhere and nowhere. It is the anonymous, faceless corporation that oversees us all, from boiler room to board room. The fact that life as a board room "house slave" is a lot more pleasant than the existence allotted to Alabama, the "boiler room slave" whose plight Spence depicts so well, does not seem to occur to the writer. Metaphysically, Spence may be right. On a practical level he is not on this planet.

Of course, by making the enemy anonymous, Spence avoids questions of class struggle and dissipates the righteous anger of the exploited. Yet it remains true that anything which exists and persists in human affairs is the way it is because someone wants it that way and has the power to keep it that way. Who benefits from this arrangement, and who pays the cost of it, are questions that Spence does not want to ask.

Spence devotes two disparaging pages to unions, unable to see that as a lawyer he belongs to one of the most powerful guilds in this country, a union in all but name, ferociously protecting its turf against any encroachment. He is as dependent on the American Bar Association for his living as any union carpenter, electrician or plumber. While Spence hopes that lawyers might become the warriors of the people in bringing corporations to heel, he overlooks the self-interest of attorneys in making the law as complicated and inaccessible as possible to protect their own privileged status.

As an alternative to unions, Spence offers his "union of one" in a passage reminiscent of Ayn Rand. This unit comprises "one man, one woman, one worker with special skills, an inquiring mind and an independent attitude, his creativity intact … who is alive." This worker "will be his own master. He will enter a place of work voluntarily to do a job for a price – *his* price. He will leave as he chooses. … The master cannot own him. This one man belongs to the union of one, is owned by no one, and represents only himself."

These new-age workers, Spence assures us, "will be gone in the morning if they are not treated fairly." Gone where? we may ask. Where are their dependents to go? It is

*continued next page*

# MAI Defeated...

*continued from page 1*

local and national authorities in a (business-dominated) international tribunal.

2) The MAI would undermine development opportunities for the poorest countries. Though negotiated as an agreement between the rich countries, the whole purpose of the agreement was to include developing countries, and to grant transnationals unrestricted access to the markets and natural resources of Third World nations. South Korea and the other Asian tigers (and in fact all industrialised nations) have developed by using precisely the interventionist policies that the MAI would rule out.

3) The MAI could dismantle legitimate social and environmental laws. Foreign companies could sue governments over laws and policies which affect them more heavily than a domestically owned company. The US-based Ethyl Corporation sued the Canadian government over Ethyl's dangerous MMT additive under similar powers in the North America Free Trade Agreement despite a clause in NAFTA supposedly setting environmental and labour standards. In that case, the Canadian authorities gave in while the case was pending. It is quite likely that the MAI would have been used in a similar fashion to intimidate local and national governments into dropping or not passing social and environmental protection laws.

4) The MAI would remove powers of local government and undermine local initiatives. Local authorities could not require investors to employ local people, use local suppliers, or remain for a minimum period of time, even if such laws applied equally to both foreign and domestic companies.

Chomsky commented in *Z magazine* in May that the full import of the MAI could not presently be accurately described – in part due to the secrecy surrounding the project, in part due to certain basic social realities. Even if we had the full text of the MAI, a detailed list of the reservations entered by the signatories, and the verbatim record of the proceedings, we would still not know what MAI meant. "The answers are not determined by words, but by the power relations that impose their interpretations. … The 'worst case' analysis could come true if 'power remains in the dark,' and the corporate lawyers who are its hired hands are able to establish their interpretation of the purposely convoluted and ambiguous wording of the draft treaty." Less threatening possibilities might also be realised, depending on the strength of popular forces determined to constrain corporate power.

What has actually happened is that the treaty as a whole has fallen apart for a variety of reasons. Jospin, explaining France's withdrawal from the negotiations Oct. 18th, said that the MAI threatened "the sovereignty of states, which are asked to commit themselves in an irreversible manner." This was partially true.

What was actually threatened was the sovereignty of some states. The threat was proportional to the weakness of the country. A major factor in the failure of the treaty was the behaviour of the USA. Many had branded the MAI "as neo-imperialism," the *Financial Times* noted. "This accusation was given credence by the US's behaviour over the MAI's proposed disputes mechanism: when it realised this could be used against Washington, it cooled on the idea," seeking to protect itself from the corporate vandalism it wished to impose on others.

What is clear is that our respective governments were not motivated by concern for the environment or the rights of workers. British trade minister Brian Wilson said on 28th October: "I think this is an opportunity to start with a blank piece of paper, to define our objectives afresh, and then seek to pursue them on an open and consensual basis" through the World Trade Organisation or some other forum. The battle is won, but the war to contain (and reverse) increasing corporate power is decidedly not over.

— Milan Rai, *Freedom*

# Mumia Abu-Jamal...

slumped on the street after being shot in the chest by Faulkner – had run from the scene of the shooting. The prosecution's claim that Jamal's legally registered pistol was the murder weapon is refuted by the simple fact that there is no evidence that Jamal's gun had been fired that night. Inconsistencies by the medical examiner and the prosecution's forensics expert have never been fully explained, so a mystery remains in that the bullet which killed Faulkner was first described to be a .44, and later described as consistent with a .38.

## Statement from Death Row

Once again, Pennsylvania's highest court has shown us the best justice that Fraternal Order of Police money can buy. Ignoring right reason, their own precedent, and fundamental justice, they have returned to the stranglehold of death. In their echoes of the tortured logic of Judge Albert Sabo, they have reflected a striking fidelity to the DA's office. If it is fair to have a tribunal who are in part admittedly paid by the FOP – and at least one justice who can double as DA one day and a judge the next in the same case – then fairness is just as empty a word as "justice." To paraphrase Judge Sabo, it is "just an emotional feeling."

In recent months the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has upheld death sentences in cases where an impartial reading of transcripts or pleadings would make an honest affirmation all but impossible. They have ignored all evidence of innocence, overlooked clear instances of jury taint, and cast a dead eye on defense attorneys' ineffectiveness. What they have done in my case is par for the course. This is a political decision, paid for by the FOP on the eve of the election. It is a Mischief Night gift from a court that has a talent for the macabre.

I am sorry that this court did not rule on the right side of history. But I am not surprised. Every time our nation has come to a fork in the road with regard to race, it has chosen to take the path of compromise and betrayal. On October 29th, 1998, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court committed a collective crime: it damned due process, strangled the fair trial, and raped justice.

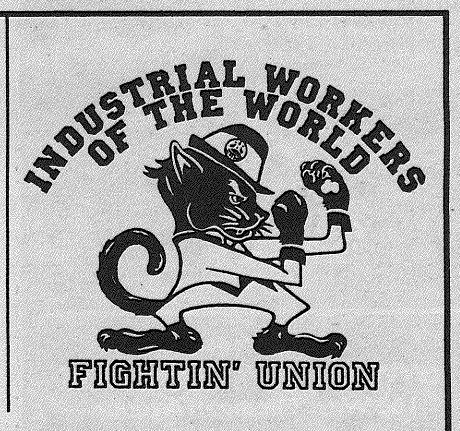
Even after this legal legerdemain [sleight of hand] I remain innocent. A court cannot make an innocent man guilty. Any ruling founded on injustice is not justice. The righteous fight for life, liberty, and for justice can only continue.

— Mumia Abu-Jamal,
SCI-Greene, Waynesburg, Penn.
October 31st, 1998


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**Black Cat** knocking over the xmas tree $5/dozen.

**Merry Commodity Fetishism** (tree crashes tv screen) $5/dozen.

not hard to see here a description of the venture capitalist or the hired-gun lawyer, rather than any ordinary working person. For Alabama and for Sarah, two displaced workers with whom Spence truly sympathizes, his "union of one" offers no hope.

Not until page 198 does Spence make concrete suggestions, urging us to end our worship of work as a good in itself and adopt a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity – a fine idea, no doubt, but one now only accessible to the upper classes. "Could we not once more live on the salary of one of the parents?" is a question that makes sense only to families that are still intact and with a securely employed and well-paid breadwinner. What the 80 percent of our fellow citizens whose incomes, the author reminds us, are declining should do remains a mystery.

Spence's analysis of the media and their role in politics is trenchant and accurate. His thoughts on the role of money in politics and in society in general are right on the money. It would be more useful, however, had he known that Marx described this "commodification of relations" 150 years ago, and gone on from there.

Most of Spence's dreams for our country are agreeable. Some, like compulsory voting enforced by denying anyone without a Voting Certificate a passport, a driver's license and even Social Security benefits, are truly Orwellian. He shows quite ably the defects in our present justice system, offers alternatives, but, as is so often the case, no suggestions on how we are to get from here to there.

To his credit, however, Spence has put some of his money where his mouth is in operating his Trial Lawyers College, an institution dedicated to training attorneys in the courtroom practice neglected in their education. No prosecutors or corporate attorneys need apply – only those with small practices and an inclination to *pro bono* work are admitted.

Spence concludes with a burst of lawyerly eloquence that, "So long as Darwinian capitalism is the name of the economic game, we shall be locked in a nation of hurt and hate, of fear and distrust, of alienation and loneliness – and of slavery." Yet we cannot help measuring this exhortation against his earlier assurance on page 126 that, "We are creatures enslaved by our genes. … We are not born to become free." If we are genetically programmed for slavery, why does Spence bother writing his book at all? Some critical editing might have been helpful here, too.

Spence does not have much to say to those who have been mulling over these matters for the past 200 years. But his book is a popular one that may move others to think more and look beyond their own fences.

— John Gorman

# Books for Rebel Workers

**One Big Union.** by IWW.
The basic introduction to the structure and methods of the Industrial Workers of the World. $2

**The General Strike.**
Ralph Chaplin's musical version of the IWW Preamble notes "without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn." He develops that idea in this essay. $2

**Labor Law for the Rank & Filer.** by Staughton Lynd.
Revised and updated, this classic self-help manual is subtitled: "building solidarity while staying clear of the law." $10

**IWW Organizing Manual** (2nd Ed)
A guide to building the IWW on the job. $5

**1999 Labor History Calendar**
Our annual calendar, $9

**A New Union Vision**
Arthur J. Miller reflects on the need for revolutionary unions today. $2

**IWW Little Red Songbook** (36th ed.)
103 labor songs from around the world, with music. Includes classics and new songs by Billy Bragg, Anne Feeney, Charlie King, Utah Phillips, etc. $10

**Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology** edited by Joyce Kornbluh
A collection of stories, poems, songs and cartoons from the English-language Wobbly press. Just reissued. $26

**Fellow Workers, Remember!**
At least 1,300 Wobblies were locked up under 'espionage' and 'criminal syndicalism' frame-ups between 1917 and 1920; this collection documents their plight and IWW efforts to fight the persecution. $5

**Fellow Worker:** The Life of Fred Thompson. Edited by D. Roediger.
Autobiographical reflections, $10

**The Great Bisbee Deportation of July 12, 1917**
compiled by Rob Hanson. $2.50

**1923 IWW Songbook**
Facsimile reprint of IWW Songs, $5

**Rebel Voices.**
IWW Songs sung by IU 630 Wobs. Tape $10.

**We Have Fed You All for 1,000 Years.**
Utah Phillips sings IWW songs. Tape $10.

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**Fire Your Boss!** $1.
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**Work Hazards and Industrial Conflict**, was $10, now $6

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Essays by eminent libertarian philosopher with commentaries by others, $6.

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# The Fight Against Overtime

The average work week in the United States has been growing for years, as employers schedule workers for more and more overtime, lunch breaks vanish, and weekends increasingly become a distant memory.

In many plants, bosses have turned to 12-hour days or six- and seven-day weeks in order to increase production without hiring new workers. Even in white-collar jobs, the 8-hour work day has practically disappeared. Meanwhile, millions of workers struggle to get by on part-time work or no work at all.

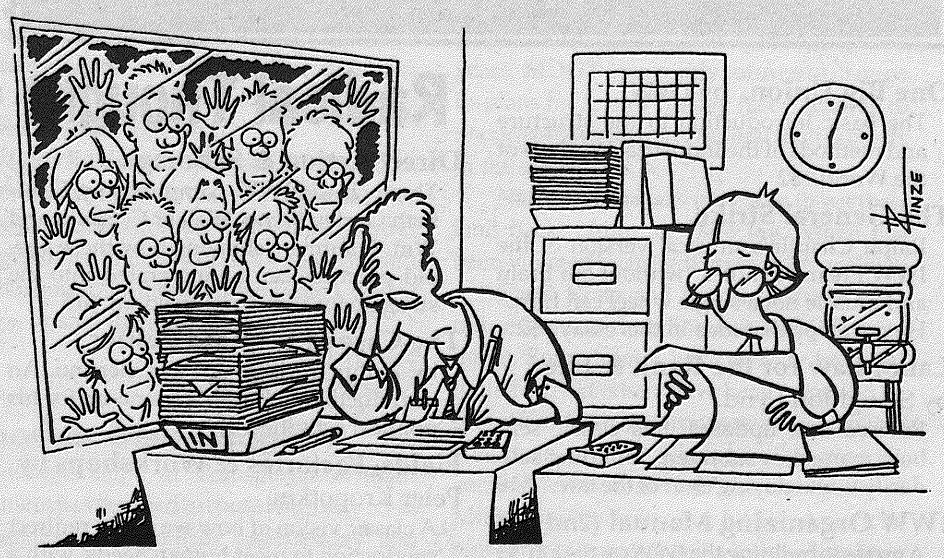
There are no hard statistics on how often bosses force workers to take overtime, but overtime hours are definitely on the rise – the average worker now puts in 5 hours a week, an all-time record – and mandatory overtime is increasingly at issue in labor negotiations.

The issue has come up in several recent strikes, including General Motors, United Parcel Service, CP&I Steel and several communications companies. "Employers are attempting to force more labor out of their current employees rather than create new jobs. That's the bottom line," said labor consultant Jim Grossfeld.

Even workers who once welcomed overtime as a means of compensating for stagnating wages are getting fed up.

After 24 years of fixing phone lines, Baltimore lineman Joseph Bryant was fired by Bell Atlantic last year for refusing overtime because he needed to pick his two children up after school. "I was just trying to balance the overtime," he said. "When you've got kids, you can't just leave them."

Bell Atlantic insisted that Bryant should have hired someone to take care of the kids, so he could be available to work scheduled overtime two to three days a week. With the support of his union, Bryant won his arbitration 18 months after he was fired from his job. But workers without union contracts or the means to survive lengthy arbitrations often do not dare question their bosses' demands.




*The hardest thing about all this compulsory overtime was trying to ignore the unemployed faces pressed up against the window...*

Overtime robs parents of time with their children and strains marriages. It causes fatigue, stress and other health problems. It keeps millions of our fellow workers on the streets, even in the midst of what the bosses say are good economic times. And it steals our free time – time that workers fought for in often-bloody struggles over the last 150 years.

When 35,000 members of the Communications Workers of America struck US West in August, their complaints included forced overtime that frequently meant 60-hour work weeks. Workers won a cap on mandatory overtime at 16 hours per week next year and eight hours per week beginning in 2001. The new Bell Atlantic workers' contract said they can't be forced to work back-to-back six-day weeks and, for most of the year, they can refuse to work more than 10 hours of overtime per week.

But that begs the question of why we are forced to work any overtime at all.

In France, the 35-hour work week is now the legal norm. Many U.S. workers have won union contracts setting the work week at 30 to 35 hours. Increased productivity and new technology mean that far more dramatic reductions in the work week are possible, if we're organized to demand them.

The labor movement was built on the struggle for shorter hours. It's time to return to that tradition and fight first to reclaim the 8-hour day, and then to renew the push for substantial reductions in the work week. It's our time, and the bosses have been stealing it for far too long. [JB]

# Dumped like yesterday's trash

At 79 years old, Annie Bliven worked the graveyard shift at Tampa (Florida) International Airport. She worked 40-hour weeks, always arriving early, and often pulled doubles to cover for workers who quit.

In her ten years as an airport toll booth cashier, Annie saw many workers come and go, most many years younger than she. Consequently, she maintained a certain distance from new workers. But once you settled in and got to know her, it was easy to see why so many fellow workers loved her. Her feistiness concealed her vulnerability in a hard world that gives no breaks to those old and alone.

Earlier this year Annie lost her closest family member. For years she had cared for her diabetic brother, a testimony to her strong sense of personal responsibility. She carried the same sense of responsibility to the workplace, never calling in sick, paying for taxis when her own car was in the shop. Unfortunately, the company Annie worked for, Republic Parking System, felt no such responsibility toward her.

Annie was fired in October. A co-worker who witnessed it said Annie cried her eyes out when she was told she no longer had a job. Management says she was terminated because she had lost three parking tickets within several months. In the world of airport parking, tickets qualify as revenue; but other cashiers with less time on the job had also lost tickets, and weren't fired.

Some fellow workers suggested that after ten years Annie was earning the top pay for Republic Parking cashiers – $8 an hour – and management wanted to weed out top earners. Others mused that RPS was getting rid of older workers who would have higher medical bills. A few weeks previous, another long-time worker who suffered from emphysema had been fired.

In a "right to work" state like Florida, such arbitrary applications of work rules and disciplinary action are the norm, and without a union workers like Annie have no protection from management.

In a ten-year career, it seems an occasional error could be viewed by a reasonable management as an honest mistake. After ten years with the company, Annie never expected to be kicked to the curb like yesterday's trash. But that is exactly what the manager who fired Annie did to her.

When word of Annie's firing spread, supervisors and co-workers rallied to her defense. Within 24 hours $80 had been raised to help the self-sufficient old lady who now needed support. Eventually almost $200 was raised.

One week later, Annie is still out of a job and unsure what she'll do next, according to Tina Curry, Annie's co-worker and friend. Annie liked working nights, explained Tina, because after her brother's death she didn't like to stay home alone.

— Chris D'Angelo

# IWW Opposes the Dues Check-off

The Industrial Workers of the World is opposed to the checkoff for several good reasons:

1) The checkoff puts the acquisition and handing over of union funds into the hands of the bosses. Not a good idea.

2) The checkoff separates the union officials from the rank and file membership. If the members have to pony up their dues out of pocket, directly to a union delegate or steward, there is direct contact between them on a monthly basis at least. The members feel like it's their union, as they pay the bills. *And they're right.* This fosters union democracy.

3) If the dues are collected by the boss, taken out of the paycheck before it gets to the members' hands, the contact is between union officials and bosses, leaving the member out of it. This fosters solidarity between the union officials and the bosses, with the obvious and oft-repeated results.

4) With checkoff, the union officials aren't really in need of the membership's approval to go about their business. If a worker hates the union, or doesn't like how it's being handled, s/he still has to pay dues.

The member has no financial control, i.e.: no real power, except occasionally to vote for Tweedle Dee or Tweedle Dum, if that's even an option, or to try to get a decertification going, which is rather extreme and hard to pull off. The business unions in this country are about as democratic as the corporations they continuously get into bed with. Economic power is real power, thus the checkoff system in the business unions.

5) The checkoff encourages a blase stay-home-on-meeting-night rank and file. Why miss the ball game, if it's not really your union anyhow? Checkoff makes it easier to let someone else do it all for you.

Bad unionism results. Uninformed apathetic members, and unaccountable officials following their own and the bosses agendas and no regular contact with the membership.

Involuntary servitude is when your money is taken without your permission and spent without your approval. That ain't union, fellow workers, it's horse crap. No wonder the unions are shrinking, along with our paychecks. If a union can't survive the loss of checkoff, let it mend its bureaucratic ways. Put the union back in Union, and the checkoff will be just another peculiar and unpleasant memory from a bygone and not lamented past.

## Solidarity

Working people have only one real option in today's economy. We have to resist, with all our might, the big business program of further and deeper poverty for working people.

For the first time in modern history, profits are going up while wages and benefits are going down. In the past the two have always been tied, however unequally. Now the game has changed. Worse impoverishment and more of it is the wave of the future if we don't stand against the tide. The working conditions we see today in Asia and Central America are a good indication of the future of our own working lives in the "Western Democracies."

We have only one hope of fending off this tidal wave of misery. That hope, that tool, is Solidarity. Every working stiff must stand up for every other working stiff, no matter where you live or where you come from, no matter the color of your skin or the language that you speak. No matter if you are male or female, young or old, we must stand together.

Every loss to any worker is a loss to us all, and every gain by any part of the working class is a victory for us all.

We must stand together. We must refuse to handle scab goods, to buy scab products, to cross the picket line. We must extend our hands across the borders and across the seas. We must support each workers' struggle as if it were our very own, because that is exactly what it is.

Together we can win. Together we can make this world a better place to live, to raise our children, to spend our old age.

Think it over. Join the I.W.W. And build militant, democratic unionism.

— Industrial Workers of the World
Portland General Membership Branch

# Be a Wobbly — Join the IWW...

**Real Democracy!** All policy decisions are made by referendum. The IWW has just one (modestly) paid officer, the General Secretary-Treasurer. The 7-member General Executive Board is elected annually by the entire membership. All officers may be recalled by referendum. IWW workplaces and branches make their own decisions about bargaining and strategy.

**To Join** mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and first month's dues to IWW, 103 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti MI 48197, or contact your local delegate. **Dues:** Monthly income under $1,000: $5 per month; Income $1,000-2,000: $10 monthly; Over $2,000: Dues $15. Initiation Fee is same as one month's dues. A low-income worker can join for as little as $10.00

__ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
__ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution and regulations.
__ I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Prov.: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

*Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker*